WEDNESDAY
April 23, 2025

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
24 Pages ₹ 6.00

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RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

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CENTRE IN SC

'Facts in T.N.'s case doesn't cover Kerala'

SOUTH » PAGE 9

YELLOW METAL GLITTERS

Gold prices soar past ₹1 lakh per 10 grams

BUSINESS » PAGE 15

PUBLIC VIEWING FROM TODAY

Pope Francis's funeral to be held on Saturday

WORLD » PAGE 16

26 killed in J&K terrorist attack

- Militants open fire at tourists visiting Baisaran in Pahalgam
- Two foreigners among those killed; PM cuts short visit to Saudi Arabia
- LeT offshoot The Resistance Front claims responsibility for the attack

Peerzada As hiq
SRINAGAR

At least 26 people, including two foreign tourists, were killed by a group of terrorists who emerged from the dense forests around the trekking paradise of the Baisaran meadows in the upper reaches of Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday afternoon.

Many others were wounded, some with critical injuries, and the toll is likely to rise, official sources told *The Hindu*. However, there was no official casualty data from the government.

The attack in Anantnag district came on a day when United States Vice-President J.D. Vance is in the country on a four-day visit. Mr. Vance shared condolences with the victims of the attack. "Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they mourn this horrific attack," he posted on X.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi "strongly condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam". He added: "Those behind this heinous act will be brought to justice... They will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger."

Mr. Modi, who is touring Saudi Arabia, skipped an official dinner on Tuesday and decided to return to India. He will arrive on Wednesday morning.

The Resistance Front, an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack. However, the security agencies did not confirm the veracity of the claim. The outfit alleged that 85,000 domicile certificates have been issued to non-locals, "creating a pathway for demographic change" in J&K. "Violence will be directed toward those attempting to settle illegally," it said in a statement.

At least 16 people were killed on the spot, while others died on the way to the hospital.

Syed Hussain Shah, a resident of Anantnag, was among those killed. Among those who were injured was an 83-year-old tourist from Tamil Nadu and a 65-year-old woman from Odisha.

Valley stunned: Security personnel rush to the spot after terrorists attacked a group of tourists at Pahalgam in Anantnag district of J&K on Tuesday. IMRAN NISSAR

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

2 VICTIMS FROM KARNATAKA » PAGE 5

SHAH RUSHES TO SRINAGAR » PAGE 13

NEARBY

New ramp of Hebbal flyover to open by May

BENGALURU
The work on the additional loop of the Hebbal flyover is nearing the finish line and is expected to be open for traffic by the first or second week of May. » PAGE 4

IAF officer booked on call centre employee's plaint

BENGALURU
Call centre employee Vikas Kumar filed a complaint against IAF officer Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose, accusing him of attempt to murder during the scuffle over road rage on Monday. » PAGE 2

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 5

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SPORTZPICS/IPL

Are the pieces of the Kings jigsaw finally falling into place?

From name to jersey tweaks, squad rebuilds to coaching staff overhauls and even transfer in ownership, change has been the only constant for the Punjab franchise

Tarun Shastry

Seventeen seasons. Two playoff appearances. One of only three franchises to participate in every edition of the Indian Premier League without tasting championship glory. There's enough between the words in these sentences to bog a team and its fanbase down. But not if you are Punjab Kings.

The last time the side made the playoffs, it wasn't even called Punjab Kings. It was Kings XI Punjab. Priyansh Arya was just 13. Prabhsimran Singh barely 14. Arshdeep Singh? He was planning a move to Canada. Shreyas Iyer hadn't made his First Class debut. And Yuzvendra Chahal was a fresh-faced discovery.

However, the struggling outfit got a shot in the arm with a vow on March 19 this year. An oath from arguably one of the greatest cricketers and sharpest brains: Ricky Ponting.

"The overall vision for this team is to win the Indian Premier League. I told the guys on the very first day at the camp in Dharamshala (that) we were going to create and become the greatest Punjab Kings team ever. That's the journey we're on and that doesn't happen overnight. You've got to create that," Ponting proclaimed ahead of the season.

From name changes to jersey overhauls, squad rebuilds to coaching staff shifts, even transfer in ownership – change has been the only constant for Punjab Kings. It has been a franchise with passion, but one that always stumbled when the going got tough.

The right mix

Ponting's appointment on a four-year contract was one of a number of 'big picture' decisions the management made. The other was retaining just two players – the uncapped duo of Shashank Singh and Prabhsimran – and going into the mega auction with ₹110.50 crore to burn.

Within the first half hour of the exercise, Kings happily splurged 26.75 crore to land a proven captain in Shreyas, the man who led Kolkata Knight Riders to its third IPL crown in 2024.

The Shreyas-Ponting combo was tried and tested, with the pair previously working together at Delhi Capitals.

"I was desperate to work with Shreyas again. He's one of the best players that I've worked with. He's a great human being. He's an IPL-winning captain. You couldn't ask for much more," said the Australian.

Punjab used its Right to Match option to retain pacer Arshdeep and also acquired the services of seasoned leggie Chahal, both for 18 crore each.

The franchise also brought in a number of well-travelled T20 stars like Glenn Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen, Josh Inglis, and Azmatullah Omarzai, among others.

A carefully curated young player pool - assembled by PBKS scouts who scoured the length and breadth of the country - made the cut. These unheralded stars have often been the difference between victory and defeat for Kings this season. On March 25, against Gujarat Titans, the cricketing world was introduced to the daring of 24-year-old Priyansh.

The left-handed opener emerged from the inaugural edition of the Delhi Premier League as its top scorer with 608 runs (two centuries, four fifties) in just 10 outings, striking at a staggering 198.69. He emulated a legendary Punjab batter – Yuvraj Singh – when he hit six sixes in an over en route an explosive 120 off 50 balls for South Delhi Superstarz against North Delhi Strikers.

Elevated to the big league, Priyansh made a jaw-dropping 47 off 21 balls (seven fours, two sixes) against Titans. He treated almost every bowler with disdain, the nonchalant six off a good length delivery from Mohammed Siraj a glowing example.

With wins in the first two games, Kings were flying high before being brought down by Jofra Archer and Rajasthan Royals. Priyansh was dismissed for a golden duck, and the Punjab batters struggled. Even a spirited resistance by Nehal Wadhera and Maxwell couldn't prevent a 50-run defeat.

Much like his team, Priyansh saved his best for M.S. Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings who came calling. A sensational 103 saw Punjab counterattack after slipping to 83 for five. The five-time champion's bowling attack was smashed for nine sixes all around the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium. Though the victory over CSK might look like it was all about Priyansh's belligerence, it wasn't.

Smart move

Super Kings pinned their hopes on Shivam Dube and his ability to negotiate quality spin in the middle overs, but Punjab made the Chennai side wait and wait by holding back its spinners. Only after the Mumbai strokeplayer's dismissal was Chahal unleashed.

Despite the thriving youngsters, Arshdeep remained the catalyst in Kings' early successes. His release ahead of the auction raised eyebrows, but he came back to the fold as new leaders took charge.

"Ever since I came to Punjab Kings, the elevation in my role and growth came pretty early. I knew that I could not mess up at crucial stages because at those times, not working as per the plan can put the team in serious trouble,"

Shreyas.

Arshdeep said while describing his role in the line-up over the years.

What worked for Kings was different players putting their hands up to do the hard yards.

It was Prabhsimran and Wadhera, against Lucknow Super Giants, who helped Shreyas hack down a 172-run target with close to four overs to spare.

That said, the hapless loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad - headlined by Abhishek Sharma's remarkable 141 - exposed the side's fault lines.

Finding form

Chahal barely had rhythm coming into the tournament and Maxwell continued to largely be a miss – one key cog struggling with the ball, the other fumbling with the bat. However, form has not stopped Shreyas and Ponting from keeping the faith, and it paid off quite handsomely against KKR.

You don't often find tales of resurrection in T20 cricket when you've managed only 111 on the board. When the opponent has gotten to 62 for three in the eighth over, it's easy to shut the book on the game. Chahal and Maxwell thought otherwise.

Chahal was at his stingy best, giving away just four runs in the ninth and 11th overs while also sending back three Knight Riders batters to peg momentum in favour of Kings. While an expensive final over - which saw Andre Russell smack him for a few sixes - tarnished his economy rate, his four-wicket haul proved to be the difference for Kings.

Chahal was ably assisted by Maxwell's two-over spell where the Aussie allrounder gave away just five runs and took the prized wicket of Venkatesh Iyer to leave KKR in trouble. PBKS would eventually pull off the unthinkable. Against the very opponent it registered the highest chase in IPL history (262 in 2024), it managed to defend the lowest total ever in the tournament, bundling out KKR for 95. This result was more than just a win. It was about individuals rediscovering not just form but themselves.

Even Ponting, a man who has seen it all in his illustrious career, had a candid admission about the historic win.

"The heart rate is still up there. I'm 50 now, and wins like these are always the sweetest. And if you can pull this off, then it should be as good a win as most guys have been involved in. I've coached a lot of games in the IPL, and that might just be the best win I've ever had.

"At the halfway mark, not many people around the world would've believed we could defend that total. Credit to all the boys. They were terrific tonight."

While tipping his hat off to his team's grit in the fixture, he was effusive in his praise for Chahal, the league's most prolific wicket-taker.

"What about Chahal tonight? How good was that spell of bowling! He actually had a fitness test before the game because of the shoulder injury he picked up last match. I pulled him aside during the warm-up, looked him in the eye and asked, 'Mate, are you okay?' And he just said, 'Coach, I'm 100% right. Let me out there.'"

Kings followed the triumph against KKR with a decimation of RCB in a rain-truncated encounter in Bengaluru.

It was a ruthless showing with the ball, with Jansen and a rejuvenated Chahal leading the way as PBKS restricted RCB to just 95.

Josh Hazlewood's resilience did little to prevent Kings, powered by Wadhera, to a five-wicket victory.

RCB turned the tide over the Easter weekend, winning the reverse fixture by successfully chasing down 157 in New Chandigarh, courtesy a chasing masterclass from Virat Kohli.

The reality checks and the reminders to not get ahead of themselves come the franchise's way ever so often.

Despite the setback, Kings look like a team on the rise. With the top-order firing on all cylinders, Shreyas providing stability in the middle, and the bowling attack finding rhythm, PBKS is firmly in the playoffs race with 10 points.

As confidence continues to build and contributions come from across the dugout, it feels like only a matter of time before they shift gears – just in time for the business end of the tournament.

THE GIST

- Kings, with 10 points from eight games so far in IPL 2025, is firmly in the playoffs race
- The Shreyas-Ponting combo was tried and tested, with the pair previously having worked together at Capitals. This think-tank has been crucial to PBKS' renewed vigour in this edition
- A carefully scouted young player pool – assembled by PBKS staff who scoured the length and breadth of the nation – has often been the difference between victory and defeat for Kings this season

Government of Jharkhand
Department of Information Technology and e-Governance
3rd Floor, Jharkhand Mantralaya, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004

Notice for Cancellation of Recruitment Process Against Advt. PR No. - 337031

It is notified for general information that the recruitment notice no.: ITsec2/UID CELL PMU -1/2018/IT/1441, dated: 24.09.2024 for the post of "**Application Developer**" under UIDAI project in Department of IT & e-Gov. has been cancelled due to unavoidable reasons.

Sd/-
(Bhim Rabidas)
Joint Secretary

PR.NO.350771 Information Technology(25-26):D

THE INSTITUTE OF ROAD TRANSPORT
Regd. Office: 100 Feet Road, Taramani, Chennai 600113, Tamil Nadu, India. irttaramani@gmail.com

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

The Institute of Road Transport (IRT), invites the following E-tenders under two bid system from Chassis manufacturers and Construction of Bus Body from reputed bus body builders separately for TNSTUs subject to the eligibility criteria as specified in the tender document.

Sl. No.	PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY	Tender Ref No	Pre-bid Date & Time (hrs)	Submission End Date & Time (hrs)
1	Procurement of BSVI diesel Town chassis	15/Chassis-Town/ CP/IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 11.00	28.05.2025 & 15.00
2	Procurement of BSVI diesel Mofussil chassis	15/Chassis-Mof/ CP/IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 11.30	
3	Procurement of BSVI diesel Fully Built Small Buses to MTC Ltd	16/Small Fully Built/ CP/IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 12.00	
4	Procurement of BS VI diesel Fully built low floor (ULE) Buses to MTC Ltd	16/LF Fully Built/ CP/IRT/ 2025	08.05.2025 & 12.30	
5	Construction of new bus body for Town operation to STUs	11/BB –Town/CP/ IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 15.00	29.05.2025 & 15.00
6	Construction of new bus body for Mofussil and Express operation to STUs	11/BB – Mof/CP/ IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 15.30	
7	Full body Renovation of old buses of TNSTUs	11/BB–Renovation / CP/IRT/2025	08.05.2025 & 16.00	

The bids shall be submitted online at **https://tntenders.tn.gov.in** with supporting documentary evidences as provided in the Instructions to Bidder in the Tender document. Modification (if any) in tender terms and conditions and tender invitation period will be uploaded only in the website and the tenderers are requested to go through the above website periodically.

DIPR/1644/Tender/2025 DIRECTOR

HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA, BENGALURU-01
HCC No.03/2021 Date: 21.04.2025

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tender is called by the High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru for Contract for running **"Canteen"** in the premises of the Karnataka Judicial Academy, Bengaluru through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of Centre for e-Governance, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru. The last date to upload the tender is fixed as on **14.05.2025 at 4:00 p.m.** For more details visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/searchTender/live** website.

Sd/-
I/c Registrar (Computers)
and Tender Inviting Authority,
High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/301/MAA/2025-26

DOCUMENTS LOST

I, G. Sheeba W/o Late Thaju R/@ No.19/1, Tirumala Extension, 1st Cross, Kittaganuru Village, K.R. Puram Post, Bengaluru-560036 do hereby solemnly state that, I have lost absolute sale deed with registration no.BDH106311/2012/2013 CD No.BDHD94 pertaining to land situated in Kittaganur Village Site. No.19, having khatha no.6435/630/19, old khata no.630 having measurement East-West 40ft, North-South 15ft total 600 sq.ft. I have also lost old khata, tax paid receipt. I have raised a complaint with Karnataka State Police on 10.04.2025 and have obtained GSC No.PO1916250600290. Said documents if found, we request you to contact Mobile No.9880920348 vide affidavit dated 09.04.2025.

VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
"Jnana Sangama", Belagavi - 590 018, Karnataka State.
Phone : 0831-2498100 Fax : 0831-2405467.

Ref. No. : V.T.U./B.G.M./S.A.P./CW1/49/T-691/2024-25/349
Date : 22-04-2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Registrar, V.T.U., Belagavi, invites e-tenders (Two Cover Systems) for the following works through E-procurement tendering mode.

Name of the Tenders : T-691 : Tender for Refurbishment of Laboratories in Bosch-Rexroth Centre at VTU Mysuru - 3rd Call. Amount put to Tender : Rs. 1,87,01,777/-, EMD : Rs. 2,81,000/-, Tender Pre Bid Meeting Date : 26-04-2025 at 11.00 a.m. through Online. Last Date for Receipt of Tender : 06-05-2025 up to 2.30 p.m. Date of Opening of Tender : 07-05-2025 at 4.00 p.m.

The details regarding participation in the e-Tendring can be accessed by logging to our **VTU Website : www.vtu.ac.in** and KPPP Portal **Website : www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Registrar.
V.T.U., Belagavi,

DIPR/Belagavi/126/Manipal/2025-26

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
'JAL BHAVAN', No. 6, 1st Stage, 1st Phase, BTM Layout
Bannerghatta Main Road, Bengaluru - 560 029
Ph : 080 - 4110 6508
e-mail:cekwbbng@gmail.com Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPPP only)

No. KWB/TEC/CE(B)/GUBBI OHT/88/2025-26 Dtd: 22/4/2025

Name of the work : "Construction of 5.0 LL Capacity on 15M Staging RCC Over Head tank (Shaft type) and other allied works in front of Government Hospital in Gubbi town under DC works of Gubbi town. (Lumpsum tender -No Variation) **KUWSDB/2024-25/WS/WORK_INDENT 328/CALL-2.**

For further details may be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER (B),
KUWS & D BOARD, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/312/AKAR/2025-26

THE HINDU GROUP

SPORTSTAR INDIAN POSTER LEAGUE

DAY 33

Play now & start winning!

1. India recorded its first-ever Test series win in the Caribbean in 1971 with a historic victory over the West Indies. Who was the captain that led India to this famous triumph?
2. Who among the following has not scored 10,000 runs in Test cricket?
3. Which cricketer held the record for the most Test centuries (34) before Sachin Tendulkar surpassed it in 2005?

*T&C apply

Scan QR code or visit **newsth.live/SSIPLPA** to take the quiz. Get all three answers right and unlock a legendary Sportstar poster. **Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.**

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A WEBINAR ON
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Senior Program Convenor, Department of Commerce, Shiv Nadar University, Chennai

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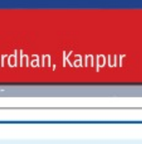

Soma Basu
Senior Deputy Editor, The Hindu (Moderator)

Friday, April 25, 2025 4 pm onwards

To register, **newsth.live/THWEBSNUPA** or scan the QR code

THE HINDU GROUP

BE A PART OF TAMIL NADU'S STARTUP BOOM.

The Hindu Tamil Nadu Startup Summit brings together founders, investors, and industry leaders to foster collaboration and drive innovation. This initiative paves the way for the upcoming Global Startup Summit organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu. Get ready for the ultimate startup power-up.

April 24, 2025
9:15 am onwards
Entry by invitation

Tune in to watch the discussion, scan the QR code or visit: **newsth.live/SUSPA**

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Presents
THE HINDU TAMIL NADU STARTUP SUMMIT-25
Co-presented by StartupTN
In association with sify

Chief Guest

Valedictory Address at 6:55 PM

Thiru T M ANBARASAN
Hon'ble Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Urban Habitat Development Board, Government of Tamil Nadu

Keynote Address at 9:30 AM

Dr Atul Anand, IAS
(Additional Chief Secretary, MSME Department, Government of Tamil Nadu)

In the presence of

Dr C Muthamizhchelvan
(Vice Chancellor, SRM Institute of Science and Technology)
AR Unnikrishnan
(Chairman, CII Tamil Nadu State Council & Managing Director - Glass Group, Saint-Gobain India Pvt Ltd)
Sivarajah Ramanathan
(Mission Director & Chief Executive Officer, Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission)

Event Schedule

Session 1: 10:15 AM - 11:15 AM
Building a Diverse Startup Ecosystem: Inclusion & Gender Equality
Dr Subalalitha C N (Professor Department of Computing Technologies, SRM Institute of Science and Technology)
Prateek Madhav (Co-founder & CEO, AssisTech Foundation)
Dr Jyotirmayee Dash (Managing Director, TeraLumen Solutions Pvt Ltd)
Moderated by **Ramya Kannan** (Chief of Bureau (Tamil Nadu), The Hindu)

Session 2: 11:20 AM - 11:50 AM
Fireside Chat: Harnessing Innovation: Tamil Nadu's Role in the Global Startup Ecosystem
Sivarajah Ramanathan (Mission Director & Chief Executive Officer, Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission)
In conversation with **Kunal Shankar** (Deputy Business Editor, The Hindu)

Session 3: 11:55 AM - 12:55 PM
Startup Success Begins in the Classroom: The Power of Education in Innovation
Dr Revathi Venkatraman (Professor & Chairperson, School of Computing, SRM Institute of Science and Technology)
Shaivee Malik (Co-founder & COO, Yotuh Energy)
Sudharsan Varatharajan (Co-Founder & CEO, Bversity)
Krishnan Balasubramanian (Institute Professor, IIT Madras)
Moderated by **Chandran Krishnan** (Managing Director & CEO, Campus Angels Network)

Session 4: 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM
Fireside Chat: Nurturing Startups from Campus to the Global Scale: Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Universities
Dr Ananth Kumar (Associate Director, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, SRM Institute of Science and Technology)
In conversation with **R Sujatha** (Deputy Editor, The Hindu)

Session 5: 2:35 PM - 3:35 PM
Nurturing Entrepreneurship in South Tamil Nadu: Opportunities & Challenges
Chandu Nair (Startup Advisor & Member Executive Board, The Chennai Angels)
Akhila Rajeshwar (Executive Director, TiE Chennai)
Vanitha Venugopal (CEO, Tamil Nadu Technology Hub (iTNT))
Sivakumar Palanisamy (Vice President, StartupTN)
Moderated by **Sangeetha Kandavel** (Senior Assistant Editor, The Hindu)

Session 6: 3:40 PM - 4:40 PM
Digital Transformation: Startup as a Catalyst for Change
Ashwin Desikan (Co-Founder & CTO, Atsuya Technologies)
Dr Tamizh Inian (Founder & CEO, Frigate Engineering Services Pvt Ltd.)
Phunith Kumar V (CPO & Co-Founder, Raptee HV)
Moderated by **Kunal Shankar** (Deputy Business Editor, The Hindu)

Session 7: 4:45 PM - 5:15 PM
Fireside Chat: Democratizing Retail: How AI is Empowering Businesses of All Sizes
Sadique Ahmed (CEO, Pathfinder)
In conversation with **John Xavier** (Editor - Technology, The Hindu)

Session 8: 5:20 PM - 5:50 PM
Fireside Chat: Cybersecurity in the Startup World: Why Stakeholders Can't Afford to Ignore It
C R Srinivasan (CEO, Sify Digital Services)
In conversation with **Suresh Vijayaraghavan** (Chief Technology Officer, The Hindu Group)

Session 9: 5:55 PM - 6:50 PM
HealthTech Innovations: Revolutionising Healthcare in Tamil Nadu
Dr Boopesh Pugazhendi (Consultant Neurosurgeon, Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore)
Dr Adith Chinnaswami (Co-Founder, MediSim VR)
Dr Lallu Joseph (Quality Manager & Associate General Superintendent, Christian Medical College, Vellore)
Sharmila Devadoss (Founder & Managing Director, MedIoTek Health Systems)
Moderated by **Dr Krishnan Ganapathy** (Neurosurgeon)

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Fragrance Partner: MANGALDEEP PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE
TV Partner: புதிய தலைமுறை

State to hold talks with Centre over PM KUSUM - A scheme

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

K.J. George

The Karnataka government is now planning to initiate talks with the Central government to begin the implementation of PM - KUSUM A scheme in the State.

Currently, the KUSUM-B scheme (solar-powered agricultural pump sets) and the KUSUM-C scheme (solarisation of agricultural feeders) have been implemented while the A scheme - designed to promote local generation and consumption of solar power, particularly among farmers and rural communities - is yet to begin.

'Additional income'

Speaking at the Taluk Agricultural Produce Cooperative Marketing Society Ltd's Amrit Mahotsav event in Chikkamagaluru district, Energy Minister K.J. George said on Tuesday, "The KUSUM-A scheme allows farmers, farmer groups, cooperative societies, panchayats, farmer produce organisations, and water user associations to set up solar power plants with capacities ranging from 500 kilowatts to a maximum of 2 megawatts, located within 5 kms of electricity substations. They can use the electricity generated, and the government will purchase any surplus."

"This initiative will help address power shortages and provide farmers with additional income. In this regard, discussions will be held with Union Ministers," the Minister added.

KUSUM - B scheme

He also said that the Central government has approved the installation of 40,000 pump sets in the State under the KUSUM - B scheme by the end of December.

IAF officer booked on call centre employee's plaint

Based on CCTV camera footage, recordings by bystanders, it was allegedly revealed that the officer attacked, assaulted the biker

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Major altercation: A grab from the CCTV footage of a fight in Bengaluru involving an IAF officer. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hours after being arrested, call centre employee Vikas Kumar filed a complaint against IAF officer Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose, accusing him of attempt to murder during the scuffle over road rage in Bengaluru on Monday.

Based on his complaint, the Byappanahalli police charged Wg. Cdr. Bose under various Sections. The duo engaged in a fistfight near C.V. Raman Nagar over road rage. Wg. Cdr. Bose was en route to the airport to go to Kolkata to attend to a medical emergency while his wife Madhumita, who is a squadron leader, was driving the car when the incident occurred.

Wg. Cdr. Bose's wife, later went to the police station and filed a complaint. Wg. Cdr. Bose also put up a video on social media accusing Mr. Kumar of assaulting him and "hurling abuses at him in Kannada".

The police initially arrested Mr. Kumar and recorded his statement. However, after verifying the CCTV footage and recordings of the incident from bystanders, it was allegedly revealed that Wg. Cdr. Bose had also assaulted Mr. Kumar. The police will summon Wg. Cdr. Bose for questioning.

IAF officer's allegations against State, Kannadigas baseless: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Siddaramaiah

Kannadigas are a people proud of their mother tongue, but they are not arrogant. They are not intolerant to attack or abuse others over the issue of language, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in response to the road rage incident in Bengaluru.

A day after videos of the scuffle between call centre employee Vikas Kumar and IAF officer Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose went viral on social media, the CM in a post on X, took exception to the "unfounded allegations" Wg. Cdr. Bose had made against Karnataka and Kannadigas. He called it an attempt to "hurt the self-respect" of Kannadigas.

"The culture of the Kannada land is one that treats all those who come and settle here from different corners of the country with respect, and loves them as Kannadigas. History is proof of this," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

The CM also hit out at national media outlets for running unverified news. "It is truly regrettable that the national media, forgetting its responsibility and professionalism, has tarnished the dignity of the entire state of Karnataka by publishing baseless allegations made by someone. This has hurt the sentiments of every Kannadiga," he added.

However, the CM warned the people of Karnataka from giving into provocations and taking the law into their hands. Mr. Siddaramaiah said, "The government in Karnataka is elected by Kannadigas. I have ordered the police commissioner to take appropriate action against the culprits, whoever they may be and whatever their position is. The State government has taken the case very seriously and is committed to ensuring justice to the wronged person."

On Tuesday, responding to a separate question from mediapersons in Mandya related to language concerns that surfaced in public discussions following the incident, Mr. Siddaramaiah reiterated the State government's position and said imposition of Hindi would not be allowed.

"We will not allow the imposition of Hindi. We will oppose it," he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said the government of Karnataka does not support the three-language formula, and only Kannada and English were being taught in educational institutions..

Statement by IAF

The IAF released a statement saying, "An unfortunate incident, involving an IAF officer, took place in Bengaluru on April 21. The IAF is assisting the local authorities in investigating and following up the case to its lawful resolution'.

Triple conjunction of planets, moon to be visible on Friday

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A rare celestial event would be visible over the city skies early on Friday. There would be a triple conjunction of the planets Venus and Saturn, along with the crescent moon.

According to astronomers, a glimpse of this phenomenon can be viewed around 5.30 a.m. on Friday.

"The morning sky on April 25 will present a beautiful spectacle about an hour before sunrise. Look east and find a bright Venus close to a crescent moon with a feeble Saturn a couple of degrees below the latter," said Professor R.C. Kapoor, formerly with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA).

'Celestial smile'

The formation of the three celestial bodies will resemble a smiley face. However, this may not be visible in India, said Prof. Kapoor.

"On the morning of April 25, moon, Venus, and Saturn will come together to form a smile configuration. In India, we will see them close, but the trio will still be hours away from the celestial smile. That is, India will miss the particular moment," he said.

"Smile-y or no smile-y, the sight nearer home will still be a beautiful one from wherever you watch. A small telescope will add to the thrill. Saturn may disappoint a bit as its rings at present are nearly edge-on," Professor Kapoor said.

'Do not look directly'

Though this event can be seen with the naked eye, Professor Kapoor cautions not to view it the sun directly or with a telescope.

Police question prime accused in Ricky Rai attack case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Continuing investigations into the attack on Ricky Rai, son of late underworld operative Muthappa Rai, the Ramanagara district police summoned Rakesh Malli, the prime suspect in the case, on Tuesday to the Bidadi police station for questioning.

Rakesh Malli appeared along with his advocate. He was questioned by Superintendent of Police, Srinivas Gowda and other senior police officials for over two hours to ascertain his possible role in the attack.

The police had earlier questioned four people, including the gunman, identified as Mannappa Vittal, who was present at the time of the attack.

The police, with the help of ballistic experts, are analysing the bullet used in the attack and the weapons found with the gunmen and at the house of Ricky.

Ricky, 35, was shot at by an unidentified assailant while he was travelling in a car with his driver and private security from his Bidadi farmhouse to Bengaluru around 12.50 a.m. on April 19. He sustained injuries on his right forearm and nose. His driver also sustained minor injuries.

The incident happened just a few metres away from the gate of Muthappa Rai's farmhouse in Bidadi. Even though the driver filed a complaint accusing Rakesh Malli and Muthappa Rai's second wife, Anuradha, the police expressed doubt given the nature of the attack and timing.

Different versions

Even the statements recorded from three security personnel of Ricky Rai gave different versions about the attack, which raised suspicion.

The police have not made any arrests so far.

Don't take coercive action against Anuradha Muthappa Rai: High Court

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

HC has directed the police to proceed with the probe, but asked them not to summon Anuradha without following due process of law

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday directed the police to not take coercive action against Anuradha, the second wife of former underworld operative late N. Muthappa Rai, subject to her cooperating for the investigation into the recent case of shooting at Rikki Rai, son of Muthappa Rai from his first wife.

Also, the Court directed the police to proceed with the investigation into the case in accordance with law but they should not summon her without following the due process of law.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar passed the interim order on the petition filed by Ms. Anuradha, who has been arraigned as accused number two in the FIR registered based on the complaint lodged by Basavaraju G., driver of Rikki Rai.

In the petition, Ms. Anuradha has claimed that the complaint lodged in connection with the shooting incident has no ingredients to attract any offence against her and for arraigning her as one of the accused persons.

It has also been claimed in the petition that she had disputes with Rikki Rai and his brother, and all those disputes were civil in nature; and more importantly all the disputes were settled last year through a mutually agreed compromise decree before a civil court in Bengaluru during October-December, 2024.

Alleging that her name was included in the complaint only with an intention to harass her, she has stated that she on Europe tour since April 14 on a vacation with her daughter from the first marriage.

Hoax bomb threat mails to two institutions

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Staff and students of R.V. College of Engineering and the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath college were evacuated on Tuesday after the two institutions received bomb threat emails.

Thorough search

The mails were received the previous night and were seen by the staff in the morning.

After a thorough check of the two premises, the threat was found to be a hoax, according to the police

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the public at large that Our Client (Kum. C.S. Srividya) holds the absolute ownership and is in full possession and enjoyment of the MIG residential property bearing B.D.A. No.MR-45 located in Nandini Layout developed by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and more fully described in the Schedule hereunder and hereinafter referred to as the **"Schedule Property"** ever since the purchase of the Schedule Property on 28.02.2005. Further, Our Client states that all original title documents of the Schedule Property including the Original Allotment Letter dated 02/05/1987 vide No. BDA/SFHS/1988/MR-45/1986-87, Original Provisional Possession letter dated 20.09.1988, Original Sale Deed dated 11.01.2005 executed in favour of the then allottee Mr. N.A.Menon, registered as Document No.BDA-1-12089-2004-05 are accidentally lost or misplaced in respect of which the Lost Report is also filed under Bangalore City Police unit and concerned authorities at BDA are also intimated in this behalf. Through this Public Notice, the public at large are also informed about the said loss of aforementioned documents by Our Client.

The public at large is hereby informed that if any information in this regard or if any/all of the documents aforementioned pertaining to Our Client's property is found, concerned person(s) are requested to contact us and handover the documents that are found, at the undersigned address **within 15 (fifteen) days** from the date of publication of this notice.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property of Ground and First floor house bearing B.D.A.No.MR.45, and the land covered by the said house and the land appurtenant thereto in the layout known as Nandini Layout (formed in the property bearing No. MR-45), and situated at Nandini S.F.H.S. Layout extension and bounded on the: **East by:** House No.MR-46; **West by:** House No.MR-44; **North by:** House No.MR-17; and **South by:** Road.

Measuring east to west (7.10 + 7.30)/2 Mtrs, and North to south (14.60 + 14.45)/2 Mtrs, and constructed area 88.88 square meters, and the land measuring 104.58 Square Meters.

Dated this 23rd day of April, 2025.

Information or Documents may be sent to:
SREENIVASA RAGHAVAN .D.V, Partner,
ATV Legal, "Trade Center" No. 29/4,
1st & 3rd Floor, Racecourse Road,
Bengaluru – 560 001, Ph: 8095829962

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in
(Contact Number- 9646118721)

Tender Enquiry No. QW-330/PO-W **Dated 21.04.2025**

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of 48800 nos. V Shape Cross arms manufactured from Mild Steel Angle conforming to IS:2062/1992 (Grade- A quality) and section details as per IS: 808/1989 & tolerances as per IS:1852/1985. The edge cutting of Cross arms should be smooth and at right angle. The seam welding of joints should be continous and uniform on one side. The fabricated Cross Arms should have level surface. The Red Oxide primer coating of the Cross arms should have smooth finish. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in** from 21.04.2025 from 16:30 pm onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in**

C 301/25 **76155/12/4169/2023/43754**

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in
(Contact Number- 9646118721)

Tender Enquiry No. QW-331/PO-W **Dated 21.04.2025**

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of 100800 no. Earth Rods manufactured from Prime Mild Steel Round 20mm conforming to IS:2062/1992 (Grade-A Quality) and sectional details as per IS: 1732/1989 (with latest editions) and tolerance as per IS: 1852/1985. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in** from 21.04.2025 from 4:30 P.M. onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in**

C 302/25 **76155/12/4170/2023/43755**

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CGM(Tech)/DGM(PROC & APCC)/EE-(Proc-2)/AEE-3/2025-26/131-147
Dt: 21.04.2025

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPPP mode only)

KPTCL invites Bids on electronic mode for the following work:

Enquiry Number / Name of the work
KPTCL/2025-26/TL/WORK_INDENT2220
Providing alternate source to the existing **220/66kV Pavagada** Receiving Station by constructing new 220kV DC line on DC towers with **High Performance Conductor (HPC)** from existing **400/220kV Kyathaganacherlu (PGCIL) station** for a distance of **31.320kms** along with **2 Nos. of 220kV Terminal Bays** at 220kV Pavagada Sub-station in Pavagada Taluk, Tumakuru District and Strengthening of existing 220kV DC Drake line from **220kV Madhugiri** Receiving Station to **220kV Pavagada** Receiving Station by **High Performance Conductor (HPC)** for a distance of **59.008kms** along with **modification works in existing 220kV Terminal Bays** at 220kV Pavagada Sub-station & 220kV Madhugiri Sub-station in Pavagada/Madhugiri Taluks, Tumakuru District on **Total Turnkey Basis"** including Supply of all Materials/Equipments, Erection (Including Dismantling and Civil Works) of all Materials/Equipments, Testing and Commissioning.
The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL" or https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 23.04.2025 at 15.30 hrs.** Last date & time for receipt of Bids is **16.05.2025 at 15:00 hrs**. for all works, **Any extension of due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal**. Any details required in this regard can also be had from the Office of the undersigned during Office hours.
All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.

Sd/-Chief General Manager (Tech), KPTCL,
Corporate Office, 2nd Floor, Kaveri Bhavan,
Bengaluru – 560 009, Tel: 080-22243926.

DIRECTORATE OF MINORITIES
Maulana Abul Kalam Aazad Bhavan,
No.16 C, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanth Nagar,
Bengaluru-560 052. Helpline: 8277799990
Website:https://dom.karnataka.gov.in
e-mail: directordom@karnataka.gov.in

No: DOM/EW/RSA/CR-01/2024-25 **Date: 21.04.2025**

Regarding the download of Hall Tickets through online for students who have applied for admission to Class 6 of Minority Residential Schools (MDRS/GMRS/ Dr APJAKRS) for the Academic year 2025-26

Hall Ticket download for the Entrance Examination for Minority Residential Schools

The Directorate of Minorities had invited online applications for free admission to class 6 in Morarji Desai Residential Schools/ Government Muslim Residential Schools/ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Residential Schools (CBSE) for the academic year 2025-26 through the Seva Sindhu portal till 10.04.2025.

Currently, students who have applied have been allowed to download their Hall Ticket through online by entering their student unique ***SATS Id***. Students can download their Hall Tickets through official website of the Directorate of Minorities mentioned below.

Hall Ticket Download Website:
https://dom.karnataka.gov.in

Entrance Examination Date: 27.04.2025, Sunday. Time: 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.
Venue: Various examination centers in Districts

In case of any grievances regarding the Hall Ticket download, students and parents can visit the nearest District Minority Office or MDRS/Dr APJAKRS/GMRS schools or Taluk Minority Information Centers. For more information, WhatsApp Mobile No:8277799990 or contact the following phone numbers during office hours (09.30 Am to 06.00 Pm).

1. 9663333135 2. 9535808084

Sd/-
Director
Directorate of Minorities, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/297/MAA/25-26

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
 # 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan,
Race Course Road, Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383,
website : www.kiadb.in, email: cdoce1@kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/PMC/EPTND-EP-01/161/2025-26 **Date: 22.04.2025**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR PROVIDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY SERVICES
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting tender under Quality Based Consultancy System (QCBS) as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Consulting Firms under two cover system for the following work :

Name of the Work : Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Formation of Industrial at Kanivehalli Boundary Block of Bavanahalli Industrial Area, Malur Taluk, Kolar District. (3rd Call)

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **08.05.2025** upto **04.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/319/Zen/2025-26

Traditional weather forecasting uses numerical weather prediction models whereas AI models start with the data and algorithms 'learn' the relationships between some inputs and an output. AFP

AI can supercharge forecasting if it can weather some challenges

Two important challenges with using AI/ML to predict increasingly erratic weather are availability of sufficient data and right human resources; still scientists believe AI/ML models can be useful to forecast extreme weather events in India such as heat waves, droughts, torrential rainfall and floods

T.V. Padma

Every year, India must face intense heat waves and also intense bursts of rainfall. In response, the country has turned to artificial intelligence (AI) for help with modelling and early warnings.

Traditional weather forecasting uses numerical weather prediction models. These models begin with physics equations that simulate atmospheric behaviour using the principles of fluid dynamics and thermodynamics. They process observational data from weather stations and satellites, including temperature and wind speed, and perform their complex, time-consuming calculations on supercomputers.

AI models start with the data instead. AI algorithms 'learn' the relationships between some inputs and an output – e.g. a given set of wind, temperature, and humidity conditions on one hand and the formation of a cyclone on the other – or extract spatial and temporal patterns from large datasets. They do this without prior knowledge of the underlying earth system processes, making them useful for applications that lack a complete theory.

For example, an AI model can explore hidden links between various earth-system variables such as air temperature, pressure and humidity or ocean temperature, salinity, and currents, to uncover cause-effect relationships existing physics-based models do not capture.

The Indian government announced 'Mission Mausam' in September 2024 with an allocation of ₹2,000 crore over two years. Its goals are to exponentially enhance the country's weather and climate observations and to better understand modelling and forecasting for more accurate and timely services.

The Mission aims to do this by, *inter alia*, developing better models and data-driven methods using AI. The Ministry of Earth Sciences has set up a dedicated AI and machine-learning (ML) centre to develop and test different techniques to improve short-range rain forecasts, develop high-resolution urban meteorological datasets, and explore these technologies for nowcasting rainfall and snow using data from Doppler radars.

Researchers are also using AI to predict weather. For example, an international team of researchers including from the DST Centre of Excellence in Climate Modeling (CECM) at IIT-Delhi and the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, New Delhi, has developed an ML model to predict monsoon rainfall. The model uses southwest monsoon data from 1901 to 2001 and accounts for the influences of the El Niño (a climate pattern that emerges due to unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD).

According to the team, this model had a forecast success rate of 61.9% for 2002-2022, better than current physical models. The team said it can also predict rains months in advance subject to the availability of El Niño and IOD data; can better capture nonlinear relationships among the monsoon's drivers; and is less computationally intensive.

Challenges are only beginning

That said, these are early years and the path ahead is challenging.

Weather systems are nonlinear and chaotic, so sophisticated models are required to capture their dynamic nature, IIT-Delhi associate professor Tanmoy Chakraborty said. AI models in particular require large, high-quality datasets to train on first. These datasets often have problems like sensor error and inconsistent data formats.

Satish Regonda, associate professor in the departments of civil engineering and climate studies at IIT-Hyderabad, said AI/ML models typically require large amounts of high-quality data because weather processes are dominated by randomness. The more data there is, the better it is to find signs of order in the chaos.

Next, scientists are often hard pressed to explain how AI models were able to make certain predictions. This is why in a February 2025 paper in *Nature Communications*, researchers from institutes across Europe wrote that operational challenges in using AI/ML to make predictions include "the complexity of AI outputs, which hinder interpretation by non-experts."

The skepticism stems from "the near impossibility of explaining the reasons for good or bad performance," Regonda added. Traditional weather models provide an intuitive understanding of the underlying processes through their equations, and the framework allows the analysis of model errors and corrections. Efforts are now underway to develop hybrid approaches by combining AI/ML with physics-based modelling for weather forecasting, according to Regonda.

Two bigger problems

In India, many weather forecasters don't use models that require high computing power and high-quality data. Instead they use the information generated from other agencies, including the India Meteorological Department (IMD), or a combination of data produced by multiple models.

Then they overlay their local knowledge, including movement of clouds and past scenarios. Regonda said, "Given the growing interest in AI/ML and as finer resolution data becomes increasingly [better] available, and because of high-intensity and short-duration rainfall events, I think AI/ML models will be used extensively in the near future in India."

Still, two important challenges with using AI/ML to predict (increasingly erratic) weather are (i) the availability of sufficient data and (ii) the right human resources. And experts differ on which of the two is a bigger hurdle.

Saroj Kanta Mishra, a professor at CECM in IIT Delhi and the leader of the team that built the monsoon model, said it was human resources, especially at the interface between AI and predicting the weather. "Climate science is not fundamentally an independent discipline and draws scientists from physics, mathematics, certain engineering branches such as mechanical and civil engineering, and computer science," according to Mishra. "It is, however, not common for many scientists from these disciplines to come into climate science as it falls somewhere between core natural sciences or core engineering disciplines."

"For scientists working on climate science, when one does not have the AI/ML expertise required for climate science, it is like a black box, and very superficial in nature," he said. "Similarly, for hardcore data, core AI/ML scientists don't have an adequate background in climate science. So the scope of doing deep research and making groundbreaking progress is highly unlikely in the present situation."

Critical mass

Climate is a complex phenomenon and its prediction in India has been a challenge for decades, Mishra added.

According to Chakraborty, "India's diverse topography and climate zones demand regionally tailored models, increasing development complexity." This is compounded by inadequate sensor networks and gaps in meteorological infrastructure, particularly in remote regions. The end result is sparse and inconsistent data, leading to subpar model accuracy.

But Mishra did not agree that the paucity of data for use in AI/ML models is a major problem "as there has been a 10-fold increase in observational data in India over the years." The need for more data and more computing power "is a never-satiable demand" that can not be achieved overnight, he added.

Instead, he said India needs a sophisticated model tailored to solve the country's problems. "If we get the right talent together, it can be [developed] in very less time," Mishra said. "For this, active collaborations between the climate scientists and AI/ML scientists are essential, and that will happen if we can keep them under one roof, for example setting up an institute exclusively for applications of AI/ML with a mission to solve the pressing issues the country is facing today."

Chakraborty echoed him: "A critical shortage of professionals with expertise in both meteorology and machine learning hinders the development and deployment of advanced models." This includes data scientists with a good understanding of the physics of the atmosphere. While more data is being collected and better, there are still challenges in data accessibility, standardisation, and integration from diverse sources, he said, especially of historical data and real-time data.

A changing future

Madhavan Nair Rajeevan, former Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, expressed belief in the reverse: that human resources for and expertise on ML-based weather modelling are not challenges *per se* but that the availability of long-term data of high quality is.

"We should ensure we compile good, reliable data sets for ML-based applications. But we will need a lot of computing resources with graphics processing unit (GPU)-based computers," he said. "In India, we have enough expertise to work with ML for weather-modelling."

> India's diverse topography and climate zones demand regionally tailored models, increasing development complexity
>
> **TANMOY CHAKRABORTY**
> Associate Professor, IIT-Delhi

In his tenure at the Ministry, Mr. Nair had initiated a centre for excellence in AI/ML at the Indian Institute for Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and supported research projects for weather and climate modelling. "Hopefully in the next one to two years, some good results will come out," he added.

Worldwide as well, scientists are trying to overcome challenges in using ML for climate science. At the 2024 Heidelberg Laureate Forum in Germany, scientists said that while they have been able to apply ML in weather forecasting with good success, they have not been able to do so so readily to problems in climate science.

"An ML model trained to predict good weather today is not very useful in a much warmer future world with a different state of the atmosphere," the forum heard. The atmosphere is also chaotic and the resulting random fluctuations interfere with the average climate change signal.

A notable emerging enterprise in this regard is hybrid modelling, in which scientists combine the physics-based climate models with the tools of ML.

AI/ML and extreme weather

Some scientists believe AI/ML models can be particularly useful to predict extreme weather events such as heat waves and torrential rainfall.

The February 2025 paper in *Nature Communications* stated that "AI has emerged as a transformative tool" to detect, forecast, analyse extreme events, generate worst-case scenarios, and "promises advances in attribution studies, explanation, and communication of risk".

That said, "accurately predicting and modeling extreme weather events, e.g. cyclones, heat waves, and cloud bursts, is crucial but challenging due to their localised and rapid development," Chakraborty said.

The paper also expressed caution about "trustworthiness concerns" that arise from the complexity and interpretability of ML models, the difficulty of generalising across different contexts, and the quantification of uncertainty. Nair agreed: "Though ML is a powerful tool, it should be used carefully, with stringent verification processes."

(T.V. Padma is a science journalist in New Delhi. tvpadma_10@yahoo.co.in)

NASA scientists propose using this technique to measure how the earth's water and ice mass is shifting as climate change worsens. GOOGLE EARTH

Cold atoms in space can weigh the Himalayas

Vasudevan Mukunth

The amount of gravitational force you experience on the earth's surface is uneven because it depends on the amount of mass nearby. If there is more mass in one area, for example due to a mountain range, the force you'll experience there will be higher than, say, in the middle of a city.

The difference between one place and the next is too small for anything other than the most sensitive instruments to notice. One such instrument is the gravity gradiometer. Say you drop a ball from the top of a building. Newton's second law states that the force acting on a body is equal to its mass multiplied by its acceleration ($F = m \cdot a$). As the ball drops, its acceleration can be calculated by dividing the force acting on the ball – which depends on the mass nearby – by its mass.

Similarly, a gravity gradiometer measures how much faster a ball falls in one place compared to another. For example, an oil company can find out where a hydrocarbon deposit is located and how it's distributed underground by using a gravity gradiometer to understand the density of the ground at various depths. Since hydrocarbons are less dense than rocks, a gravity gradiometer will reveal that the ball accelerates less when dropped above the location of the deposit.

> **In quantum gravity gradiometer, atoms of a particular element are cooled to near absolute zero in a vacuum so that they start behaving like waves, and are manipulated by lasers**

In a March 14 paper in *EPJ Quantum Technology*, a team of NASA scientists proposed a novel idea: that an advanced quantum gravity gradiometer (QGG) could be placed onboard a satellite and launched into low-earth orbit. From that lofty perch, the instrument could study small changes in the earth's distribution of water, ice, and rocks to inform studies of climate change as well as help countries improve national security.

In a QGG, atoms of a particular element are cooled to near absolute zero in a vacuum so that they start behaving like waves, and are manipulated by lasers. In this state, they experience a phase shift that's directly proportional to the strength of the gravitational force acting on them. The shift is extremely sensitive. By using a pair of such setups say 1m apart, a QGG can deduce a difference in acceleration lower than 10^{-15} m/s^2 across a distance of 1 m on the earth's surface.

In other words, a clump of ultra-cold atoms and lasers in space can measure how much the Himalayas weigh.

According to the NASA team, such a QGG onboard a satellite could weigh around 125 kg, have a volume of 250 litres (like an oil drum), and consume 350 W (like an old Intel CPU).

In the paper, the team has proposed a technology demonstration to verify a QGG can be sent to space, followed by an operational mission. "We need to fly it so that we can figure out how well it will operate, and that will allow us to not only advance the quantum gravity gradiometer, but also quantum technology in general," Ben Stray, a postdoctoral researcher and one of the team members, said in a statement.

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For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

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East West Institute of Technology Honours Visionary Leader and Launches Student-Centric Initiatives

East West Institute of Technology (EWIT) marked a significant milestone on Tuesady, with the unveiling of a statue dedicated to the late Ravikiran C N, the former Chairman of the East West Group of Institutions (EWGI), on the occasion of his birth anniversary. Ravikiran, remembered as a dynamic and inspirational leader, was instrumental in shaping the growth and success of EWGI. His firm commitment to academic excellence, infrastructure development, and student-centric initiatives laid a strong foundation for the institution's continued progress. His legacy continues to guide EWGI's mission to empower future generations of students.

The unveiling ceremony was a tribute to Ravikiran's enduring contributions, and it was followed by the announcement of a groundbreaking initiative aimed at enhancing student experiences.

"Industry on Campus @ EWIT" is a facility established with the goal of bringing industry closer to education. It provides students with invaluable opportunities for internships, industry-led projects, mentorship, and real-time exposure to corporate practices — all within the campus itself.

EWGI has also expanded its global reach by forging new international academic collaborations. These partnerships, part of the Global Academic Collaboration programme, will offer students access to enriched academic experiences and international exposure. Notable collaborations include Seokyeong University in South Korea (MBA & leadership), Vittenberg University in the Netherlands (Applied/Medical/ Engineering Sciences), Regent College in the UK (Business, Health, Law), Regent Middle East in Dubai (Tech-driven learning), and MVSU in the USA (upcoming in Engineering, Arts & Sciences). These developments are only the beginning, as EWIT plans to roll out further progressive initiatives aimed at enriching students' academic journeys and preparing them for successful careers.

Recent milestone achieved by EWGI

- New Academic Branches Introduced: Launched programmes in Artificial Intelligence, Agro Technology, Bachelor of Hotel Management (BHM), and Law to meet emerging industry demands.
- Center of Excellence: Established to promote innovation and industry-academic collaboration in tech-driven research and training.
- Professors of Practice: Onboarded seasoned industry experts to deliver skill development programmes aligned with real-world applications.
- Autonomous Status: Enabled EWIT to introduce dynamic, industry-relevant curriculum updates and cutting-edge programmes.
- AI-Driven Placement Application: Resulted in a 60%+ increase in student placements, offering 24/7 personalised placement support and career tracking.
- Industry on Campus @ EWIT: Integrated internships, live industry projects, and mentorship within the campus to enhance practical learning.
- Overseas University Connect Programmes: Expanded global academic partnerships to provide international exposure and collaborative learning opportunities.

Karnataka HC reserves verdict on Ranya Rao's bail plea

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the petitions filed by actor Ranya Rao and her accomplice Tarun Konduru Raju, seeking release on bail in the gold smuggling case. Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty reserved the verdict on conclusion of the arguments.

The actor was detained at the Bengaluru airport on

Ranya Rao

March 3 after it was found that she was carrying about 14 kg of gold bars illegally without declaring it at the designated Customs desk.

She is the step-daughter of K. Ramachandra Rao, Director-General of Police.

Earlier, the advocate representing the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), which is probing the case, clarified to the court that the memo of arrest was served on Ranya's husband along with the grounds of arrest, necessity to arrest her, and other details. The DRI has denied allegation made on behalf of Ranya that memo of arrest was not served as per the law.

Meanwhile, to a query by the court whether the statement of Mr. Rao, Ranya's stepfather, was recorded in connection with the issue of providing protocol facility to Ranya at the airport, the counsel for DRI stated that the probe is still going on.

However, the court wondered why the DRI has not yet recorded his statement, though a police constable had given a statement indicating that a protocol facility was given to Ranya on the instruction of Mr. Rao.

BBMP clears 3,570 tonnes of waste in two days

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a city-wide 10-day cleanliness-drive that has entered its second day, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) cleared 3,570 tones of waste and construction debris from 458 sites.

The effort spans all eight BBMP zones, with Zonal Commissioners overseeing the operations on the ground. Bangalore Solid Waste Management Ltd. staff are actively involved at each site to ensure efficient waste removal.

As part of the campaign, 1,533 locations with accumulated waste – ranging from construction and demolition (C&D) debris to roadside logs and garbage – have been identified. Clearance has already been completed at 30% of these sites. More than 13 JCBs, 10 tippers, 60 tractors, and 170 personnel have been deployed across the city.

The BBMP has urged citizens to refrain from dumping waste in public areas and instead hand over waste to BBMP's door-to-door auto tippers. Residents spotting illegal dumping are encouraged to report it via the BBMP helpline (1533) or the Sahay 2.0 mobile app.

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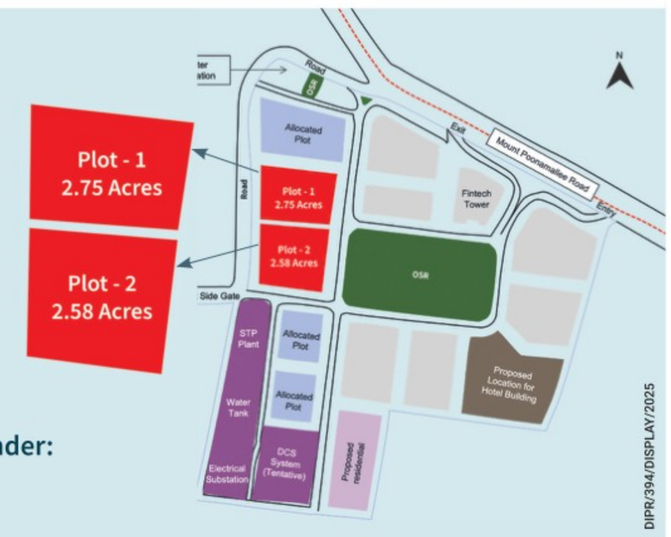

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Chief Commissioner, BBMP

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

IMF's lower growth projection for India for 2025-26 fiscal year

6.2 in per cent. The Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.2% in 2025-26, slower than earlier estimated rate of 6.5%, due to escalated trade tensions and global uncertainty, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday. According to the report, the global growth is projected at 2.8% in 2025, lower by 0.5 percentage points estimated earlier. PTI

Death toll from Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip on Tuesday

14 Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed at least 14 Palestinians, and destroyed bulldozers and other heavy equipment that had been supplied by mediators to clear rubble. Israel's 18-month offensive against Hamas has destroyed vast areas of Gaza, raising fears that much of it may never be rebuilt. The territory already had a shortage of heavy equipment. AP

Fine imposed on construction projects for violations in Delhi

40 in ₹ lakh. In a strict move against dust pollution, the Delhi Environment Department has imposed a fine of ₹40 lakh fine on a commercial construction project in Delhi following minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa's instructions to crack down on violators. Show-cause notices have been issued to four construction sites, each facing a penalty of ₹10 lakh. PTI

People in Ethiopia to be affected by the halt in WFP's services

3.6 million. The World Food Programme said Tuesday that it was suspending aid for 650,000 malnourished women and children in Ethiopia due to a lack of funding. The WFP too has been caught in the crosshairs of funding cuts by U.S. President Donald Trump, who in January signed an executive order freezing all foreign aid for three months. AFP

Rise in footfall at Indian heritage sites from 2019 to 2024

19 in per cent. India's centrally protected ticketed monuments experienced an over 19% surge in footfall in 2023-24 compared to the pre-pandemic levels, official data shows. However, revenue from ticket sales dropped by 2.83% — the combined revenue went from from ₹312.54 crore in 2019-20 to ₹303.70 crore in 2023-24. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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EU's far-right vs judiciary conflict

Certain far-right political figures in the European Union have been subjects of recent high-profile court cases that did not end in their favour, giving rise to accusations of political persecution and some deep contentions about judicial independence

EXPLAINER

Franciszek Snarski

The story so far:

Across the European Union, a significant and escalating conflict is unfolding between ascendant right-wing nationalist parties and the judicial systems of member states. Recent court rulings targeting prominent far-right figures have led to accusations of political persecution and calls for protest, forming part of a broader, deeply contentious struggle over judicial independence, the rule of law, and the very nature of democratic governance.

Which rulings have intensified the conflict?

The immediate triggers for the heightened conflict are several high-profile court decisions. In France, the political landscape was shaken when the Paris Criminal Court delivered a verdict on March 31 against Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Rally (RN) party, sentencing her for the embezzlement of EU funds. The sentence included a four-year prison term (two years suspended) and, crucially, a five-year ban from holding public office. This ruling, handed down just over two years before the anticipated 2027 French presidential elections in which Ms. Le Pen was a leading contender, effectively sidelines her unless overturned on appeal.

Similar confrontations are evident elsewhere. In Romania, the Constitutional Court upheld a decision barring Călin Georgescu, a far-right figure who unexpectedly topped the first round of the 2024 presidential election before it was annulled, from running in the rescheduled May 2025 contest. The court's actions were rooted in the principle of "militant democracy", citing Mr. Georgescu's alleged antidemocratic behaviour, fraudulent campaign financing declarations, and suspected links to Russian-backed subversion efforts, which led to the annulment of the initial election results.

Meanwhile, in Germany, the domestic intelligence agency (BfV) has classified the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party as a suspected threat to democracy and the constitution, placing it under closer scrutiny. Although formal attempts to ban parties in Germany face high legal hurdles and have rarely succeeded since the 1950s, the BfV's designation highlights deep concerns within the German establishment about the AfD's compatibility with the country's "free democratic basic order".

What are the reactions?

The reactions from the targeted parties and their supporters have been swift and defiant. Ms. Le Pen and her supporters immediately decried the verdict, framing it as politically motivated. She labelled the proceedings a "political witch hunt" aimed at crippling her party and argued the Sapin II law, on the basis of which she was banned from running for office, was being improperly applied retrospectively. Vowing not to "give up", Ms. Le Pen has appealed the decision, with a hearing scheduled for 2026.

Meanwhile, fellow nationalist leaders across the continent commented on the rulings. Following the Le Pen verdict, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán posted "Je Suis Marine" on the social media platform X, while Italy's Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, leader of the Lega party, also voiced support for Ms. Le Pen and criticised 'Brussels' and 'leftwing radicals'.

The AfD in Germany has pursued legal challenges against the BfV's surveillance and classification decisions, while also taking internal steps, such as dissolving its official youth wing ("Young Alternative")–which the BfV had classified as extremist–in a move Politico described as potentially aiming to avert a ban and destigmatise the party.

The narrative consistently pushed by the European conservative-nationalists is that these legal actions are not genuine applications of law but rather politically motivated manoeuvres by an entrenched "establishment" or "elite" seeking to eliminate potent electoral rivals who have been gaining significant ground across Europe.

How does this impact wider European politics?

This resonates with a segment of the populace disillusioned with traditional politics. They argue that the judiciary – far from being impartial – has become a tool to suppress conservative-nationalist movements, questioning the selective application of laws like Sapin II and alleging that similar transgressions by mainstream figures are often overlooked.

This conflict feeds into a wider, ongoing debate within the EU concerning the meaning and application of the rule of law. Liberal and centrist forces, alongside EU institutions like the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), strongly maintain that adherence to the rule of law, including judicial independence and constitutional checks and balances, is fundamental to the Union's values and legal order.

They view attacks on the judiciary, particularly measures aimed at curtailing its independence as seen in Poland, during the former ultra-conservative PiS-led government, and currently in Hungary under Mr. Orbán, as direct threats to democracy itself.

Conversely, many conservative-nationalist voices argue that the "rule of law" concept is being weaponised by Brussels and national elites to impose a specific political agenda, overriding national sovereignty and democratic mandates.

Are foreign actors involved?

Adding another layer of complexity are persistent concerns about foreign interference, particularly from Russia. Analysis from institutions like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and reports from organisations like The Soufan Center suggest systematic Russian efforts to undermine democratic processes in the West through disinformation, financial support for extremist parties, and cyber operations.

The Romanian election annulment explicitly referenced suspicions of external manipulation favouring Mr. Georgescu, and historical financial links between parties like Ms. Le Pen's RN and Russian entities fuel anxieties about Moscow's influence.

While direct interference can be hard to isolate from domestic political dynamics, experts warn that Russia actively cultivates networks and exploits existing vulnerabilities within EU member states to promote anti-EU, anti-NATO sentiment and destabilise liberal democracies from within.

Prominent figures outside Europe have also weighed in. Following the Le Pen ruling, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance had stated that the conviction was imposed for a "very minor offense" and the resulting ban was "not democracy".

Tech billionaire Elon Musk called the ruling "abuse" that would "backfire", comparing it to legal actions against U.S. President Donald Trump and accusing "the radical left" of abusing the legal system globally to jail opponents.

Where does it leave the rule of law?

The escalating clash leaves the principle of the rule of law in a precarious position. When significant portions of the electorate perceive the judiciary not as an independent arbiter but as a political actor actively working against their chosen representatives, trust in fundamental democratic institutions erodes.

The rhetoric popularised by figures like Mr. Trump, calling to "drain the swamp", finds fertile ground among Europeans, particularly younger generations who may lack lived memory of authoritarian regimes of communist Eastern Europe and right-wing military dictatorships in Iberia and Greece, where courts genuinely served as instruments of political oppression.

This erosion of trust poses a long-term challenge. As Marek Safjan, a former judge of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal and the CJEU, noted, while the European judiciary, particularly the CJEU, commands significant respect and has been key to integration, it is not immune to political pressures and the rise of populism.

If courts are increasingly seen as mere players in the political fray rather than guardians of constitutional principles, the essential checks and balances underpinning European democracies risk being fatally weakened, opening the door to further democratic backsliding and instability.

Grand stand: Reactions to the conviction of Marine Le Pen included a demonstration called by SOS Racisme, French Human Rights League (LDH) and the French union General Confederation of Labour (CGT) to 'defend the rule of law' in Paris, on April 12. AFP

THE GIST

- A few prominent cases — including the verdicts against National Rally leader Marine Le Pen in France and Călin Georgescu in Romania, and government action against Alternative for Germany in Germany — have served as triggers, escalating this conflict.
- The targeted parties and fellow nationalist leaders have been quick to react, terming the legal action as politically motivated manoeuvres.
- The clash leaves the principle of law in a precarious position, and the trust in fundamental democratic institutions in the lurch.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SURAJ, s/o: Devi Prasad, r/o: Flt–311, 1st Flr, Victorain Avenue, Block 3, 6th D Main, 13th Crs, Indira Nagar 2nd Stage, Blr–560038. Have Changed my Name as Suraj Chandola. Affidavit dated on 19/04/25.

I, Rajesh Debnath S/O Amalendu Debnath R/O Flat 102, Ravi Teja Enclave, Patel Muniyappa Layout, V Nagenahalli, Rt Nagar Post, Bangalore, Karnataka-560032, Have Changed The Name Of My Minor Daughter Namely Sree Moyee Debnath (Aged 13 Years 8 Months) And She Shall Hereafter Be Known As Srimoyi Debnath For All Future Purposes

I, VIJAYALAKSHMI, D/o No. Ex-1310939, Sapper, Late: Gopu Naidu, residing at No. 259, 2nd Main road, Lakshmanapuri, Gandhinagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560009. In my father's army records, my name and date of birth was wrongly entered as G.Vijaya and 12-02-1962 instead of my correct name and date of birth is Vijayalakshmi and 01-01-1964 vide affidavit dated 21-04-2025 swor before Notary C.K. Anupama, Bengaluru.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NANDAN Kumar S/o Annappayya born on 27/07/1976 residing at EA 4 Magan samara Mews JP Nagar 7th phase have changed my name to Given name: Nandan and Surname: Kumar vide affidavit dt. 18/04/2025 at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ms. KOCHUTHRESIA .K.A @ SISTER TRESAMARIA, D/o Late Abraham K.P. age 73 years, R/o No. 26, Davis Road, St. Thomas Town Post, Bangalore-560 084 do hereby declare that both the names i.e. **KOCHUTHRESIA .K.A** and **SISTER TRESAMARIA** are one and the same and refers to me only, henceforth I shall be known and called as **KOCHUTHRESIA .K.A** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22-04-2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **R.S. VIJAY** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

We, **1. RAVIKUMAR KRISHNA DASAPPA,** age 49 years, S/o Sri Krishna Dasappa and **2. SUMAM K.S.,** W/o Ravikumar Krishna Dasappa, both R/at No. 35/1, Vasudevapura, Tharalu Post, Kanakapura Main Road, Bangalore-560 082 do hereby declare that we have changed our son's name from **SANGEET NARAYANAN RAVIKUMAR** to **SANGEET KRISHNA RAVIKUMAR,** henceforth he shall be known and called as **SANGEET KRISHNA RAVIKUMAR** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22nd April 2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **ARAVIND PATIL .G.G** at Bangalore.

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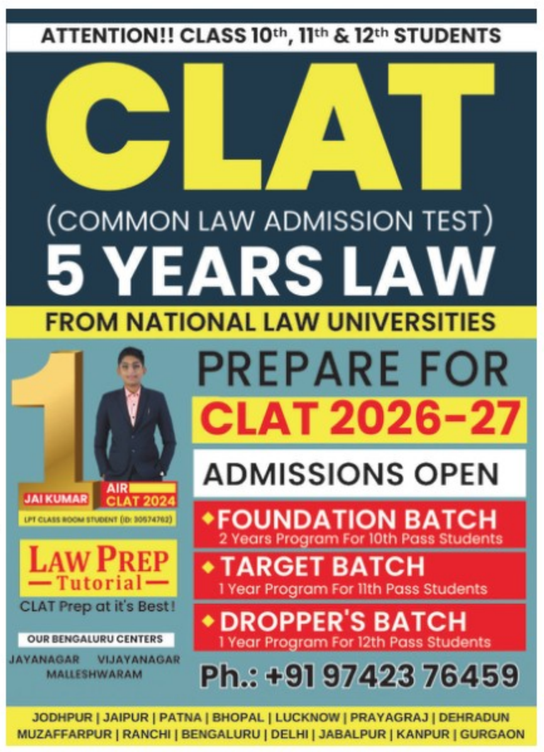
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UPSC exam: Two from State secure places in top 50

R. Rangamanju from Bengaluru secures AIR 24 while Sachin B. Guttur from Haveri getsAIR 41

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/HUBBALLI

Two candidates from Karnataka have managed to secure a place in the All India Rank (AIR) 50 list in the Civil Services (Main) Examination-2024 conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

R. Rangamanju from Bengaluru secured AIR 24 and emerged as the State topper, while Sachin Basavaraj Guttur from Haveri district succeeded in securing AIR 41. Incidentally, both candidates are medical graduates.

R. Rangamanju and Sachin B. Guttur. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This year, more than 30 candidates managed to crack the CSE from the State

Son of IPS officer

Dr. Rangamanju, son of former IPS officer R. Ramesh, achieved the feat in his sixth attempt. "Other than consistency, patience, and hard work, there are no strategies for success. My father was my biggest inspiration. He passed away while he was an IPS officer," he said.

"I completed my schooling in National Public School, Rajajinagar, and medical graduation at Bengaluru Medical College and Research Institute. It was my sixth attempt at the exam, so I feel very fortunate to have made it this time. I owe it all to my mother, who is my biggest source of support. She encouraged me through all my previous attempts. I also owe a lot to my Biology teacher who's now the Principal of NPS Rajajinagar," he added.

"I took up Anthropology in the main exam. I didn't get any training for either prelims or mains exam. I did group study with my friends. We used to solve the previous question papers. I got interview guidance at an academy," said Rangamanju.

Farmer's son

The other rank holder, Dr. Sachin B. Guttur, who secured AIR 41 in CSE, is the son of a farmer-brick manufacturer and a home maker. Having graduated from JJM Medical College in Davanagere in 2019, he opted for civil services and succeeded in his fourth attempt.

A native of Kodeyala Hosapete in Ranebennur of Haveri district, Sachin studied till class 10 at MKET School in Harihara and then completed PUC at Vaishnavi Chetana PU College in Davanagere before joining JJM Medical college to pursue MBBS as per his father's wish.

Although he went to Delhi to prepare for the civil services in 2019, he had to return because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Post COVID-19, he continued his preparations at Bengaluru and after his first attempt, he again went to Delhi.

During his previous attempts, he had failed to qualify for the interview. "But I continued by efforts, analysing and rectifying my mistakes. Parental support and encouragement helped me to succeed," Dr. Sachin said.

Expressing happiness over son's success, his father Mr. Basavaraj said that he wanted his son to be a doctor and accordingly he completed his medical education. "However, he later chose to prepare for civil services and has worked hard for the last five years," he said.

This year, more than 30 candidates managed to crack the CSE from the State. Anupriya Sakya from Bengaluru secured AIR 120 and another doctor Dayanand, former President of Karnataka Association of Resident Doctors (KARD), secured AIR 615.

SWR rolls out Indian Railways' first Converged Communication System

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

The South Western Railway (SWR) has started installing a cutting-edge Converged Communication System (CCS), marking the first such implementation on the Indian Railways network. The ₹55-crore project integrates voice, video, and data services into a single platform, aiming to revolutionise operational communication and security infrastructure, according to SWR officials.

Officials said the system will ensure seamless and secure communication across stations, trains, and operational centres. A major highlight of the CCS is the deployment of an advanced Video Surveillance System (VSS) across 228 railway stations. Of these, 14 A and B category stations are being covered under the Nirbhaya Fund, while the remaining 214 are funded through capital expenditure.

"The VSS network includes 2,784 high-definition cameras – ranging from Full HD Bullet and Dome cameras to Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) and 4K Ultra HD Bullet cameras – installed at critical locations within stations. These cameras are equipped with artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled features such as Face Recognition System (FRS), Video Analytics (VA), and a centralised Video Management System (VMS). All data from the cameras is monitored through Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCC) established at both divisional and zonal levels," a senior SWR official said.

A data centre in Mysuru, which is a part of the cutting-edge Converged Communication System that the SWR has begun installing. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Officials say the system will ensure seamless and secure communication across stations, trains, and operational centres

The official further explained that SWR is transitioning from the older Synchronous Digital Hierarchy (SDH) technology to the more robust and scalable system.

"SDH has limitations in bandwidth efficiency and flexibility. On the other hand, this system allows dynamic routing and better bandwidth utilisation, making it ideal for the evolving communication needs of the Railways," he described.

The new AI-driven CCTV system uses machine learning algorithms to track live footage and detect specific events such as unusual motion, lighting changes, colour patterns (e.g., a person in a red shirt), and even potentially dangerous scenarios such as loitering or a person collapsing.

The Mysuru Division has already commissioned CCTV systems at 31 stations, established the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), and set up a Divisional Network Operations Centre (NOC). Additionally, a VoIP-based Train Control Communication System (TCCS) is now fully operational at 71 stations in the division, according to officials.

Security audits have been successfully completed at key stations including Mysuru, Pandavapura, and Mandya (MYA). "With full deployment achieved in Mysuru Division, South Western Railway is on track to complete the zone-wide rollout of the Converged Communication System by September 2025," the official added.

CCB cracks down on IPL betting, illegal ticket sale

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Central Crime Branch police, in a series of raids since April 2 booked 15 cases and arrested 14 persons involved in cricket betting and selling tickets illegally. City police commissioner B. Dayananda said that the officials also seized ₹54,000 along with the bank accounts with a total cash of ₹36 lakh. The police also seized chips used to sell to the punters for betting.

Probe revealed that the accused sourced complimentary tickets from companies and sold them at higher prices, while some tickets were being sourced from the staff of the stadium. A few staff and employees of the stadium have been already booked. Further probe under way.

Timings
BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, APR. 23	
RISE 06:03	SET 18:33
RISE 02:24	SET 14:20
THURSDAY, APR. 24	
RISE 06:02	SET 18:33
RISE 03:07	SET 15:16
FRIDAY, APR. 25	
RISE 06:02	SET 18:33
RISE 03:50	SET 16:12

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	34	20
Bengaluru	34	21

Bengaluru Today
34°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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New ramp of Hebbal flyover to open by May

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The work on the additional loop of the Hebbal flyover, which provides extra carriageway to vehicles coming from K.R. Puram towards Mehkri Circle and central parts of Bengaluru, is nearing the finish line and is expected to be open for traffic by the first or second week of May. The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) will miss yet another deadline of April 30 for the completion of the project.

The work has led to commuters getting stuck for long periods, even during non-peak hours, on the flyover that is notorious for its traffic snarls.

"This is a weekday afternoon, and it took me around 15 to 20 minutes to cross the Hebbal flyover. I am coming from Byatarayanapura and have to go towards Mehkri Circle, and hence I took the loop of the flyover. The work on the flyover seems never-ending, and, due to all the construction material and dust piling up on the sides of the flyover, it has become a horrible experience to get to the other side," said Navaneeth Iyer, a private employee who was riding on the Hebbal flyover.

The incomplete additional loop of the Hebbal flyover. The work has led to commuters getting stuck for long periods, even during non-peak hours. K. MURALI KUMAR

"We have to install two to three slabs under railway supervision. That is the only work left. We are confident of opening the extra ramp in May," said Jayaram, Commissioner, BDA.

However, even when the loop is thrown open to traffic, it does not exactly provide a solution to the traffic bottleneck that forms where the airport traffic joins the Hebbal flyover near Esteem Mall. While the BDA's original plan was to add the additional ramp from Esteem Mall to Baptist Hospital, it was modified earlier this year to the current plan to avoid further traffic problems in the area.

"We had some kind of hope that the additional ramp would provide more lanes for the traffic coming from the airport and the Yelahanka side. But now, the extra lanes will only benefit the IT crowd coming from Outer Ring Road (ORR) and not the commuters from the other side," lamented Guruprasad, an auto rickshaw driver who regularly travels through Hebbal.

Easing congestion

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) officials said that while the additional ramp might not provide a solution to the traffic bottleneck, it will at least lessen the load on the congested lanes a little.

"The main problem we are currently facing is to hold back traffic coming from the airport side due to the ongoing work of the flyover. Before the K.R. Puram ramp was dismantled, vehicles from that side would enter the main road and cause congestion. Now, vehicles come from underneath the flyover and take the loop and then join the main road, which is also delaying the traffic flow on the flyover. When the new ramp is inaugurated, we think it might reduce the current traffic load on the existing loop by 40%," said Siri Gowri, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic, North Division.

As for the traffic issues faced by those coming from the airport side, she said, "We do not have a plan in place as of now. Depending on how things will flow once the ramp is open, we will regulate traffic accordingly."

Experts, however, opine that any interventions done to prevent congestion on the flyover will only have a short-term effect. "Whatever we do on Hebbal flyover, including ramps, will have short term impact due to the sheer increase in the number of vehicular population. We cannot just make more roads and expect to manage the traffic. The problems on the flyover is caused by the rate of incoming vehicles which approach from the airport side and that is what causes the clogging. If we do not work on reducing the number of vehicles and disincentivising private vehicle ownership, then we will not take the city anywhere and only make the situation worse. The current intervention might relieve congestion at some points, but it will give rise to new ones," said Ashish Verma, professor, IISc, Sustainable Transportation Lab.

Operation to capture two tigers under way in Kodagu district

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A major operation is under way in Kodagu district to capture two elusive tigers sighted in Theralu and surrounding villages under the jurisdiction of Birunani Gram Panchayat. The Forest Department, supported by elephants from the Dubare elephant camp – Gopi and Srirama – has been involved in the effort for the past five days.

Virajpet MLA A. S. Ponnana on Tuesday visited the areas where the operation was being carried out to oversee the efforts and interact with both forest officials and concerned residents. The MLA claimed that the department has been granted permission to capture the tigers and noted that the matter has been discussed with Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre.

He held detailed discussions with forest officials following multiple reports of tiger sightings in Teralu, B. Shettigeri, Srimangala, and other nearby villages. He urged officials to expedite the capture, citing the growing fear among residents living near the forest fringes.

To enhance coordination, forest officials suggested creating a WhatsApp group that includes local forest officers, the GP PDOs, and residents. This group would serve as a platform to share real-time alerts on tiger sightings and coordinate responses.

Senior forest officer Jagannath stated that surveillance operations are currently monitoring tiger movements from Iruppu to Kotiyalu, with several tracking camps established.

The MLA said Teralu falls within the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, and added that the safety of villagers in forest-border areas has to be a priority. He also emphasised the need for a sensitive approach towards the poor and tribal communities residing nearby.

Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Nehru added that over 60 forest officers and personnel have been deployed in the combing operation.

Woman held for stealing gold from parents' house

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Marathahalli police have arrested a 36-year-old woman for allegedly stealing gold from her father's house. R. Raju, a resident of Yemlur, had gone to Varanasi with his family on March 27. Upon returning home, he found that the door lock was intact but 258 grams of gold valuables worth ₹21 lakh kept in the wardrobe was missing.

The police, going by the nature of the theft, following the complaint, questioned Raju, who expressed doubt over his daughter, sister and nephew who were aware of the trip and the valuables at home.

The police summoned Raju's daughter, Shobha, who works as a domestic help, and a detailed inquiry allegedly led her to confess to the crime.

Based on the confession, the police recovered 30 grams of gold valuables, which she had allegedly pawned at a jewellery shop in Marathahalli, and the rest of the valuables from her house in Kaggadasapura.

Small indie publishers of Kannada books form association, aim to revive Bengaluru Book Festival

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Small indie publishers of Kannada books have joined hands with booksellers and writers to form a new association, 'Karnataka Booksellers, Publishers and Writers Association,' aiming to revive the Bengaluru Book Festival and organise similar book festivals in other districts regularly.

The new association will be inaugurated on Wednesday. Noted independent publishers like Aharnishi, Pallava, Ruthumana, Akruthi, and Jeerunde have already become members of the association.

"Now, there are two such associations already. But both associations are dominated by big publishers and small indie publishers like us, neither has a say nor any space in those associations. Our issues and requirements are different. New and small publishers like ours need professional workshops, access to distribution networks, among others. The existing associations do not focus on these issues," said N. Dhananjaya of Jeerunde Prakashana and Beetle Book Shop, secretary of the new association.

"The two existing associations only have publishers and don't include booksellers and writers. We think we need to include the entire ecosystem to work effectively," he said.

"We intend to organise workshops for publishers on professional aspects of publishing like printing, online sales, selling translation and adaptation rights for the books we publish, among other issues. As an association, we want to see whether we can also create a distribution network and make it available to our members. For instance, presently, no Kannada publishers go to book fairs across the country or abroad. We want to represent all our publishers at such fairs. This may help our books get picked up for translation," said Guruprasad D.N., of Akruthi Books and president of the new association.

The association wants to revive Bengaluru Book Festival, which was an annual feature earlier and has not been held since the pandemic. "Book festivals are a very big source of revenue for book publishers and booksellers. Presently, the only such avenue is the Kannada Sahitya Sammelana. We want to hold talks with the government and revive the Bengaluru Book Festival this year, if possible. Holding book exhibitions in districts will help us reach untapped readership," Mr. Guruprasad said.

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ABSTRACT

India's political infodemic: notes from five State elections

Targeted campaigns and pointed propaganda have made their way directly to private messages, shaping public opinion and discourse in unexpected ways, and thereby offering a modern means to electoral victory

Vignesh Karthik K.R.
Aakansha Tandon

India's vibrant democratic landscape has always been marked by theatrics: mass rallies, passionate speeches, and intensive door-to-door campaigning. Yet, the past decade has witnessed this traditional electoral model intertwine significantly with digital platforms, giving rise to a phenomenon of 'infodemic'. While the word initially referred to the deluge of misleading information during the COVID-19 crisis, it now applies equally well to the continual onslaught of propaganda, half-truths, and outright falsehoods in political communication.

This new-age electoral dynamic, meticulously analysed by Joyojeet Pal, Azhagu Meena, Drupa Dinnie Charles and Anmol Panda, manifests most visibly in private messaging spaces like WhatsApp, placing targeted propaganda directly into users' hands and everyday conversations. The turning point emerged distinctly during the 2014 general elections, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi leveraged social media effectively, notably X (then Twitter), to bypass traditional media gatekeepers.

With internet penetration in India now reaching about 88 crore users and WhatsApp itself boasting over 59 crore active accounts, digital strategies have become indispensable campaign tools. Researchers Kiran Garimella and Dean Eckles highlight how manipulated images and misleading messages infiltrate local networks rapidly, outpacing fact-checking efforts.

Vital tool: Be it Prime Minister Narendra Modi leveraging social media platforms ahead of the 2014 general elections or the BJP's Sheesh Mahal narrative in the run up to the Delhi elections, digital campaigns have proven quite effective. G. RAMAKRISHNA; PTI

Infiltrating community spaces

Central to the political infodemic is the covert infiltration of private WhatsApp groups, which were initially formed for community or casual interactions. These spaces have become prime targets for propaganda.

Local activists frequently compile voter lists, adding unsuspecting citizens into WhatsApp groups cleverly disguised as community forums, Resident Welfare Associations, or hobbyist groups. These groups gradually disseminate politically charged messages, embedding subtle propaganda into everyday interactions. Pal et al., emphasise how effectively these messages spread.

Once they permeate small groups, mainstream media often pick up these trends, amplifying their reach and lending them credibility. The result is a rapid transition from localised misinformation to national headlines, significantly altering public perception.

The WhatsApp Pramukh model

A highly organised mechanism drives these digital strategies. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s implementation of 'WhatsApp Pramukhs', as analysed by researcher Divish Joshi, exemplifies this structured approach. These Pramukhs manage digital communications at local levels, systematically categorising voters based on caste, religion, economic status, and other demographics. They then distribute carefully crafted content–memes, videos, and doctored images–aligned with party agendas.

Local booth workers, often acting as WhatsApp Pramukhs, monitor content effectiveness meticulously, tracking engagement through forwards and responses. Messages that resonate well are swiftly amplified across multiple groups, creating a powerful ripple effect. Political leaders leverage these strategies deliberately, ensuring that their talking points penetrate deeply into community dialogues.

Data-driven targeting and profiling

Hyperlocal influence hinges significantly on sophisticated voter profiling. Parties purchase or obtain voter data, analysing it to identify community affiliations, regional issues, and ideological leanings. This data informs the creation of targeted WhatsApp groups tailored to specific demographic or interest cohorts.

Telangana's recent Assembly elections exemplify such micro-targeting. The Congress successfully cultivated digital volunteer networks, strategically highlighting agrarian distress and electricity costs to discredit incumbents, significantly impacting rural voter sentiment. Conversely, the BJP leveraged community-based groups, circulating nationalist and Hindutva-centric appeals.

Garimella and Eckles note rampant image-based disinformation, including old protest images repurposed against political rivals, proliferating unchecked in these groups and effectively polarising local communities.

Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) claimed oversight of approximately 1.5 lakh WhatsApp groups. These groups delivered hyper-targeted content focusing on caste affiliations, regional disparities, and unemployment, responding dynamically to voter reactions. The rival Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) employed a comparable digital apparatus through its "Team Jagananna" app, addressing voter queries and emphasising party achievements. This targeted digital rivalry deeply influenced local voter behaviour, often exacerbating existing social divides.

Five elections, one strategy

Across various Indian States, digital tactics exhibit distinct regional adaptations while retaining overarching strategies

In Telangana, the Congress harnessed digital volunteers to emphasise voter concerns effectively, whereas the BJP ran covert community-centric campaigns emphasising religious sentiments.

For the Andhra Pradesh elections, TDP's extensive WhatsApp group network focused intensely on caste and regional identities, employing strategic misinformation campaigns around sensitive issues like land rights. The YSRCP mirrored these strategies with equal efficiency albeit less effectively, promoting welfare initiatives and undermining Opposition narratives.

In the Maharashtra elections, the BJP, notably under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, projected infrastructural achievements through tailored digital campaigns. The Opposition responded with counter-narratives, though not without missteps–such as sharing misleading visuals that were quickly debunked.

As for the Haryana elections, BJP activists infiltrated community groups with narratives emphasising caste consolidation and strong leadership, embedding propaganda subtly into local traditions and folklore. The Congress struggled to match this grassroots approach, highlighting a significant disparity in digital reach.

For the Delhi elections, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and BJP fiercely contested through AI-generated memes and viral content, with each party rapidly disseminating targeted narratives to specific demographic segments. BJP's "Sheesh Mahal" narrative contrasted with AAP's pointed criticism of governance issues, demonstrating the potency of rapid digital dissemination.

Incentivising digital volunteer armies

Recognising the significance of motivated digital cadres, parties have invested in incentivisation mechanisms. The BJP has launched multiple apps–Kamal Connect, Saral App, and Nation with Namo–to assign tasks, track volunteer performance, and maintain competitive leaderboards, enhancing volunteer engagement through gamification.

Similarly, the Congress rewarded Telangana volunteers contributing to electoral success with digital smart cards offering insurance and potential party roles. Regional parties like TDP and YSRCP have also developed sophisticated digital volunteer management systems, using real-time feedback to refine their outreach.

Democratic implications, challenges

As Pal et al., stress, digital platforms have merged irrevocably with traditional electoral campaigning. This fusion erodes distinctions between overt advertising and covert propaganda, creating fertile ground for manipulative political communication.

Garimella and Eckles warn that encrypted private channels like WhatsApp accelerate the spread of unchecked misinformation, overpowering fact-checking efforts due to sheer volume and speed. The broader democratic implications are profound. When misinformation saturates personal conversations, it skews voter perceptions and potentially compromises electoral integrity, making informed democratic choices challenging. Effective countermeasures depend significantly on civil society vigilance, independent journalism, and informed citizen activism to expose and counter manipulative strategies.

What next?

The future promises intensified battles over digital influence, as parties continuously refine methods to dominate encrypted spaces. India's infodemic symbolises a broader global trend where digital micro-targeting increasingly shapes electoral outcomes subtly yet decisively.

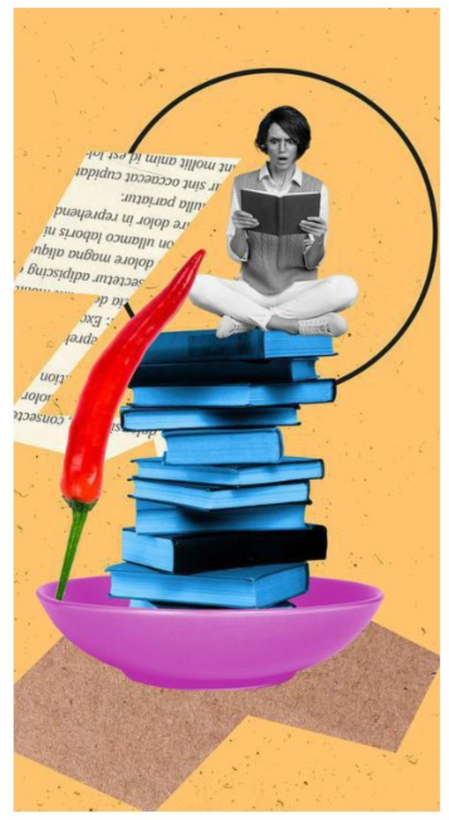
Although fact-checking organisations exist, they struggle to match the speed and volume of viral content. Also, when half-truths are deployed in a war of narratives, fact-checking has a chequered impact.

The choice before Indian democracy is clear: heightened vigilance and proactive intervention to safeguard electoral integrity or passive acceptance of digital manipulation as a new political norm. Ultimately, preserving genuine democratic engagement hinges on collective responsibility–by alert citizens, proactive media, and responsive civil society–in mitigating the corrosive effects of unchecked digital propaganda.

Without widespread watchfulness, the infodemic will continue to flourish, subtly nudging millions of citizens in directions they might never have chosen through genuine, open discourse.

Vignesh Karthik K.R. is a postdoctoral research fellow of Indian and Indonesian politics at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies - Leiden.

Aakansha Tandon is a political consultant based in the NCR.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"What has happened to Raju? He behaves in a strange way these days."

"His recent promotion has turned his head. He has become vain."

"Turn his head – what does it mean?"

"When something causes a person to become vain, you say it has turned his head. There are very few whose heads don't turn when they are continuously successful."

"Does Raju drink?"

"He is the chairman of the Prohibition Committee. He drinks on the sly."

"On the sly – what does it mean?"

"On the sly means secretly. Would you care for a cup of coffee? Just made; it is piping hot."

"Piping hot?"

"Yes. It means very hot."

"No. I like my coffee lukewarm, neither too hot nor too cold."

"OK. You wait for sometime and take it."

"By the way, I am planning to go to Calcutta tomorrow to see my uncle. He has been ill and is dangerous now."

"Your uncle may be dangerous but not when he is ill. You mean his condition is dangerous, is critical."

"Yes. I hope he comes through. I am jittery, though."

"Jittery?"

"Yes. I am nervous."

"What is the meaning of 'indolent'?"

"'Indolent' means 'lazy'. The 'o' and 'e' are pronounced like the 'a' in China. The stress is on the first syllable."

"What is Alexander's beard?"

"Alexander, the Great, had no beard. He did a lot of things but couldn't grow a beard! Alexander's beard is a beardless, smooth chin."

Published in The Hindu on April 2, 1996.

Words of the day

Convalescence:
gradual healing (through rest) after sickness or injury

Synonyms: recovery, recuperation

Usage: *Her childhood home served as the perfect place for her long convalescence.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/convalescencepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kɔ̃.va.lɛ.sɑ̃s/

Fastidious:
giving careful attention to detail; hard to please; excessively concerned with cleanliness

Synonym: exacting

Usage: *He is quite fastidious about his daughter's affairs.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/fastidiouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fæˈstɪdi.əs/

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564. He died on the same day in 1616. Here is a quiz on the Bard.

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1
Which English poet hailed Shakespeare with the now famous epithet: "not of an age, but for all time"?

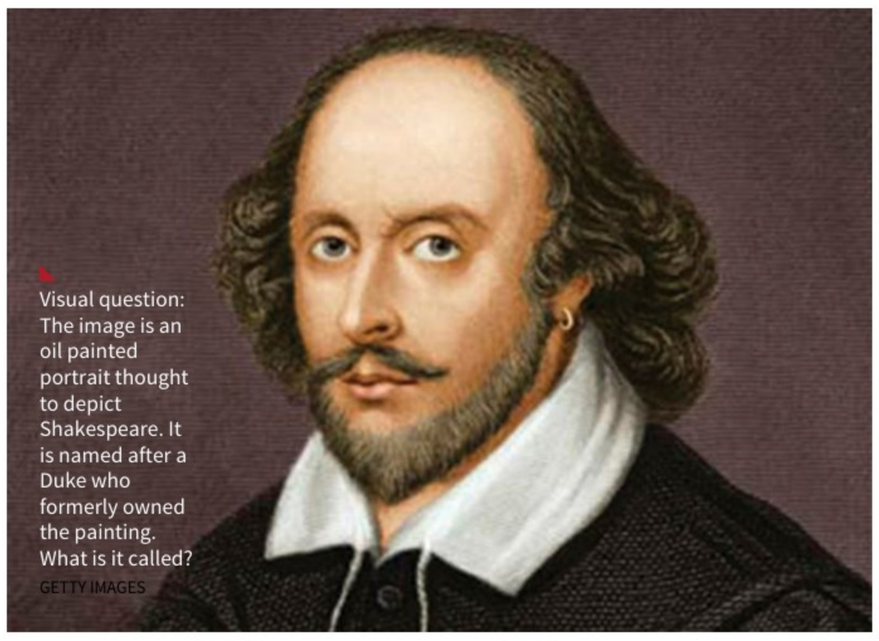
QUESTION 2
What was the name of Shakespeare's child who was speculated to be related to one of the playwright's most famous tragedies? Name the play as well.

QUESTION 3
This is one of the first recorded works of Shakespeare. It depicts the Machiavellian rise to power and subsequent short reign of the said king. Name the eponymous play.

QUESTION 4
In the early 17th century, Shakespeare wrote the so-called "problem plays". Name the problem play which is set in the backdrop of the Trojan War at Troy.

QUESTION 5
What are 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece'?

QUESTION 6
What is the term used to define an excessive admiration of Shakespeare?



Visual question: The image is an oil painted portrait thought to depict Shakespeare. It is named after a Duke who formerly owned the painting. What is it called?
GETTY IMAGES

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz.
1. Pope's birthname. **Ans: Jorge Bergoglio**
2. Argentinian football club the Pope was a fan of. **Ans: San Lorenzo**
3. The topic to which the Pope said, "Who am I to judge?" **Ans: Question on a gay priest**
4. South American country where the Pope apologised in 2015. **Ans: Bolivia**
5. Artefact presented by its President. **Ans: A 'Communist crucifix'**
Visual: Movie and Sir Anthony Hopkins' role. **Ans: The Two Popes Pope Benedict XVI**

Early Birds
Omkar Bante| Dodo Jayaditya| Tom Alan Faith| Siddhartha Viswanathan| Sonali Das

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Two from State among those killed in terrorist attack in Pahalgam

Manjunath Rao of Shivamogga and Bharath Bhushan of Mathikere in Bengaluru were among the victims

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/BENGALURU

Two persons from Karnataka – one from Shivamogga and another from Bengaluru – were among the tourists who died in the terrorist attack at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday.

Manjunath Rao, a resident of Shivamogga, and Bharath Bhushan, a resident of Mathikere in Bengaluru, were among those killed, while their families who were with them are safe.

It is learnt that while Bharath Bhushan, 41, a software employee, succumbed to bullet wounds, his wife, Sujatha, and their three-year-old son, who were with him at the time, survived the assault. Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, who is currently in Kashmir for a PAC meeting, confirmed the news through a post on X and said that arrangements were being made for their safe stay in Anantnag and that they would be transported to Bengaluru at the earliest.

Bharath Bhushan

Manjunath Rao

The second victim, Manjunath Rao, a 47-year-old realtor, was on a trip to J&K with his wife, Pallavi, and their 18-year-old son. His wife and son are safe. They had left Shivamogga for the trip on April 19. They were scheduled to return on April 24.

Shivamogga Superintendent of Police G.K. Mithun Kumar told *The Hindu* that he and Deputy Commissioner Gurudatta Hegade had been in touch with the officers. "Manjunath died on the spot. We are coordinating with the officers. We are expecting that the body will be taken to Srinagar and later airlifted," the SP said.

A dream shattered

Ms. Pallavi, who spoke to the media over the phone from Pahalgam, said that when the terrorists shot at her husband, she and her son were with him. "We had reached the spot by horse riding. My husband was looking to buy something for my son to eat. Within minutes, I found my husband in a pool of blood. He died in front of my eyes, and I was helpless," she said. She asked the militants to kill her, too. "Both my son and I asked the militants to kill us, too. But the terrorist said he would not kill us but asked us to convey this to Prime Minister Narendra Modi," she said.

Ms. Pallavi, a manager at the Birur branch of Malnad Areca Marketing Cooperative Society, said it was her husband's dream to visit Kashmir. "Now, I feel we should not have come here," she said. She is expecting the Karnataka government to make suitable arrangements to bring the body to their native place.

Help by locals

"The driver, who took the group to the tourist spot, has been helpful. He has been with us since the incident took place. Three local Muslims, reciting 'Bismillah', helped us come down from the place where the attack happened. They were like my brothers. One of them carried my son. Two others helped me cross the tough terrain. The local people have been supportive," Ms. Pallavi narrated.

The family members of Manjunath learnt about the incident by 3 p.m. His cousin Deepa told the media that Manjunath had contacted a relative in the morning to wish him on his wedding anniversary. "Within hours, we got the news that he is no more. We are all in shock. So far, we have not been able to convey this news to his mother," she said.

Lad to leave for Kashmir

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Soon after reports emerged that tourists from Karnataka were among those killed in the terrorist attack, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah convened an emergency meeting with top officials to assess the situation.

Labour Minister Santosh Lad is set to leave for Kashmir on Wednesday to help the surviving families, while a team of officials led by IPS officer Chetan R. has been dispatched.

Police personnel have also accompanied the team to provide logistical support.

The Karnataka Resident Commissioner in Delhi has been directed to coordinate the next steps, the CMO said.

Three people booked in 'case of hurt' over garbage row

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The K.S. Layout police have registered a 'case of hurt' against three persons who allegedly assaulted a 46-year-old over a trivial row on Monday.

The victim, Arabindo Gupta, a professor at a private college, was riding his two-wheeler at Kadirenahalli cross at Minhaj Nagar when the accused, travelling by a car, allegedly threw a garbage bag on the roadside. Noticing the garbage cover containing glass pieces thrown dangerously, Mr. Gupta objected to their act. Enraged by this, the trio allegedly assaulted him and left the place. Mr. Gupta sustained injuries on his face and went to a nearby hospital for treatment before approaching the police.

He also recorded a video highlighting his plight and uploaded it on the social media.

Initially, the police registered a non-cognisable report (NCR), and later, after the victim insisted, the police registered an FIR charging the unidentified men for hurt.

The police on Tuesday visited the spot and checked for CCTV camera footage to identity the attackers.

Committee set up to probe axing of 40 trees in Mysuru

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

In the wake of widespread public anger over the felling of 40 fully grown trees on Hyder Ali Road here, Deputy Commissioner G. Lakshmikanth Reddy has constituted a three-member committee to investigate the incident.

An order issued by Mr. Reddy on Monday states that the probe committee will be chaired by the MUDA Commissioner. The Deputy Conservator of Forests, Hunsur, will serve as a member, while the Executive Engineer of the District Urban Development and Planning Department has been appointed as the committee's secretary.

The tree-felling, carried out near the office of the Superintendent of Police as part of a road-widening project, has drawn strong criticism from citizens, NGOs, and environmental groups. Protests have erupted daily, with participants demanding accountability and questioning the rationale behind sacrificing green cover for urban infrastructure.

The panel is tasked with determining whether road-widening was essential, if the tree felling was technically justified, whether all required permissions and clearances were obtained, and if the action complied with applicable regulations. The committee has been instructed to submit a detailed report within seven days, outlining its findings and recommendations.

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2	Senior Project Officer (Safety)	1 Post (UR)	
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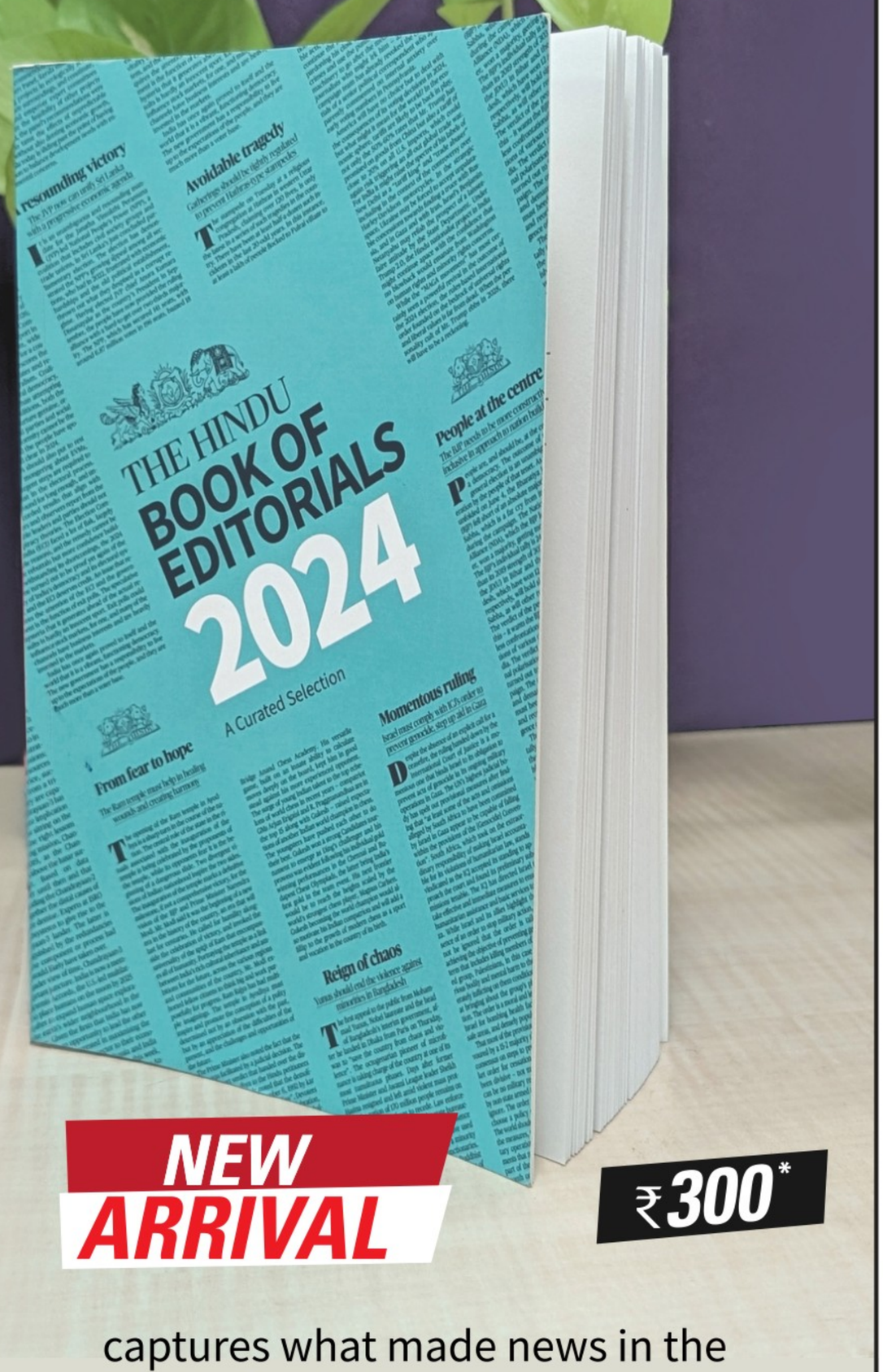

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Dominant castes' real fear is over power dynamics at the grassroots

The numbers that have now been published in the caste census report are likely to allow the other backward classes to challenge the traditional political dominance of some communities in the State

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Data collection: A file photo of the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey being conducted in Mandya.

The release of the population data of castes/sub-castes in Karnataka, as part of the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey (popularly called caste census), has generated much political heat. Though the dominant Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities have termed the survey "unscientific" and have called for a new survey, the real underlying fact is the fear among the communities over a possible change in the political landscape and power dynamics between castes at the local level.

Political dominance in most places depends on the sway that certain castes hold locally. The numbers that have now been published are likely to allow the other backward classes to challenge the dominance of a community, which the land-owning Vokkaliga or Veerashaiva-Lingayats normally hold.

In ticket distribution

"Feudal structure at the grassroots can get shaken. If other castes come together, these traditional structures will also come under pressure. Political parties may also start looking at the numbers carefully and distribute the ticket," said P.R. Ramesh, former Congress MLC. "A big political implication from the published data can be that the parties could try social engineering and justice in the distribution of ticket."

The 2015 survey by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes puts the percentage of the Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities, which have so far dominated the State's politics, of the total population in the State to be 10.29 and 11, respectively, far below their claimed figure of about 13% to 15% and 17% to 22%, respectively.

In the current classification of the backward classes, barring about 24 castes among the about 197 castes/550 sub-castes classified as backward class in the State, the rest have had no political representation so far in the Assembly or Parliament through elections, commission sources said. Though many castes get represented in local bodies, there are still castes that have not had any representation at any level.

"It has been observed that many of the castes do not have adequate population or money power. Parties do not distribute the ticket to leaders from such castes, which results in a lack of representation. Leadership has also not evolved in such communities," said K.N. Lingappa, a member of H. Kantharaj commission, which conducted the survey.

Acknowledging the fear of power structure altering on the ground, Akhila Bharatha Veerashaiva Mahasabha secretary H.M. Renuka Prasanna said, "We also fear that the same population data could be used for reservation in local bodies. Already, with 50% reservation in local bodies, efforts are made to reserve the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community-dominated wards to other communities and keep the wards where the caste population is not dominant in the general category. This will reduce the chances of candidates from the community winning elections. Our political representation will come down drastically."

Delimitation exercise

He also blamed the delimitation exercise, after which the State went to the polls in 2008, for reducing the number of Veerashaiva-Lingayat legislators in the Assembly. "As many as 24 constituencies that Lingayat legislators would win were reserved, including five each in Raichur and Ballari districts. Today, in Ballari, which produced several Lingayat leaders, Lingayats cannot win even one seat," he said. The fear of Vokkaligas and Lingayats remains common, and a Vokkaliga leader in the Janata Dal (Secular) said that once the number of winnable constituencies gets reduced, it influences the power structure. "In local bodies, the position of president and vice-president is also reserved. If the number of winnable wards is reduced, the total number of elected representatives from the community also gets reduced. The claim on the president or vice-president posts becomes difficult." The political manoeuvres become difficult at the local level if the number of other castes are also big, he said.

Errors, if any, will be corrected, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that errors or shortcomings, if any, in the report on the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey will be corrected.

Speaking to reporters at Nagamangala in Mandya district on Tuesday, Mr. Siddaramaiah said he had sought the opinion of Ministers and party members. On receiving them, the issue would be reviewed and a suitable decision taken in the Cabinet meeting, he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah lashed out at the BJP for criticising the report, saying that the party had no moral right to do so. "The report was submitted by Jayaprakash Hegde, who was appointed as chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes during the tenure of the BJP," he said.

Yeshasvini health scheme: Panel for rate revision of up to 50% for some procedures

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Rates of various medical procedures under the modified Yeshasvini health scheme are likely to see an upward revision soon. A committee of experts set up by the government to study the current market rates of various procedures and propose a revision has recommended up to 50% rise for some complex procedures.

The committee, headed by MLA for Kudligi Srinivas N.T., who is an ophthalmologist, submitted its report to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday. While a standard revision ranging between 15% and 25% has been recommended for most of the procedures, the committee has proposed a 50% rate revision for some complex procedures such as paediatric heart surgeries, oncology, neurosurgery, and interventional radiology.

The modified Yeshasvini health scheme was launched in 2022-2023.
GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

'The existing rates fixed in 2017-2018 were too low for several procedures, and many private hospitals were hesitant to get empanelled'

Largest scheme

Launched in 2003 in Karnataka, Yeshasvini was one of the largest self-funded healthcare schemes in the country. When Arogya Karnataka was rolled out in the State in March 2018, eight independent health schemes, including Yeshasvini, were merged under one head. The idea was to eliminate the overlap of multiple health schemes and duplication in fund release. However, following a demand from farmers and cooperative society members, the scheme was relaunched in 2022-2023.

Under the modified scheme, rural beneficiaries can avail themselves of cashless treatment costing up to ₹5 lakh every year for an annual contribution of ₹500 for a family of four members and ₹100 for every additional member. While the ceiling of treatment cost is the same for urban beneficiaries too, they have to pay an annual contribution of ₹1,000 for a family of four and ₹200 for every additional member. About 45.6 lakh members of cooperative bodies in urban and rural areas have enrolled under this scheme till March-end this year.

"We studied the current market rates in the last six months, involving several top doctors and industry leaders. We met 13 times and have recommended the rationalisation of the existing 2,128 procedures. While six outdated procedures have been dropped, 69 new procedures have been added under the same codes. With this, the total number of medical procedures covered under the scheme now stands at 2,191," Dr. Srinivas told *The Hindu* after submitting the report.

Pointing out that the existing rates fixed in 2017-2018 were too low for several procedures, the MLA said many private hospitals were hesitant to get empanelled for the scheme. "As of now, we have 782 empanelled hospitals, but we are hoping, with the proposed revision, more hospitals will agree to treat patients under the scheme," he said.

Under the scheme, 68,159 beneficiaries were treated at a total cost of ₹117.79 crore in 2024-2025. "It is estimated that over 75,000 beneficiaries are likely to avail themselves of treatment this financial year at a total cost of ₹127.5 crore. With the addition of new procedures and the proposed rate revision of over 50% for some procedures, we have urged the government to release additional grants of ₹40 crore for the scheme," the MLA added.

Special drive announced to provide documents for nomadic communities

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Taking serious note of the lack of essential identity documents among members of nomadic communities, chairperson of the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Nomadic Development Corporation Pallavi G. has announced a special drive for them to get access to documents such as Aadhaar, voter identity card, and ration card.

"The condition of nomadic communities is deeply concerning," she said. "During my visits to various settlements, I observed that many lack basic amenities. Worse still, a significant number don't possess identity documents," she told reporters here on Tuesday, following a review meeting on the implementation of development schemes for nomadic communities in the district.

"The absence of these vital and basic documents prevents them from accessing government welfare schemes. To address this, we will begin a special drive wherein officials will visit these settlements and facilitate the issuance of identity documents on the spot," she said.

When asked about the population size of SC and ST nomadic communities as per the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey, Ms. Pallavi declined to comment, citing the unavailability of the report.

"The survey findings haven't been made public yet. According to the 2011 Census, the nomadic population stands at around 11 lakh. However, community leaders claim the number is much higher," she said.

Referring to her visit to a Budga Jangam nomadic community settlement near Kusnoor Road in Kalaburagi, Ms. Pallavi said that she came across a serious complaint of the local fair price shop owner charging ₹100 from each family for disbursing free rice under the Anna Bhagya scheme.

High Court rejects petition questioning legality of Siddaramaiah's election

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has rejected a petition questioning the legality of the election of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to the Legislative Assembly from the Varuna segment in the polls held in April 2023.

Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav passed the order on Tuesday while rejecting the petition filed by K.M. Shankara, a voter from the constituency in Mysuru district.

While citing the judgments of the apex court, the High Court refused to accept the petitioner's contention that promises made in the Congress party's election manifesto, particularly the five guarantee schemes, amount to corrupt practices under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Mr. Justice Yadav also noted that already two petitions, in which return of two other MLAs of the Congress in the 2023 election was challenged, were dismissed by the High Court by declaring that "promises in the election manifesto by itself do not amount to corrupt practices, by placing reliance on the judgments of the apex court". The court also said that owning up of the political party's manifesto or the handouts does not take away the manifesto and the handout being admittedly an appeal by the party to the vote for its candidates, and such promises cannot be imputed to the candidates. On affixing of the signature of Mr. Siddaramaiah on the handout of the guarantee schemes, the court said Mr. Siddaramaiah had affixed his signature in his capacity as the Congress legislature party leader and not more.

Also, Mr. Justice Yadav pointed out that a perusal of the election petition would indicate that the same was drafted with "no attention to detail with vague pleadings, factual errors, and replication of pleadings from other elections petitions", which were filed against other MLAs challenging their elections on the ground that promise of the guarantee schemes amounts to corrupt practice.

"... By law it is mandated that an election petition requires careful drafting and the present petition does not evidence attention to necessary details and is drafted in a very casual manner," the court said.

Rahul flayed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

By criticising the Election Commission of India on a foreign soil, the U.S., Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has not only denigrated India but also "committed constitutional and political impropriety", chief whip of the Opposition in the Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar said in a statement.

Recover encroached areas of tanks: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday instructed officials of the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority to recover encroached tank bed areas without any leniency.

The Chief Minister chaired a meeting with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar along with officials, and directed the Development Commissioner to complete the task of surveying 10,710 tanks in Karnataka in the next two months.

A total of 41,875 tanks come under the jurisdiction of the Rural Development Department, Minor Irrigation Department, BBMP, BDA, Forest Department, Revenue Department, and other urban local bodies and the survey of 31,033 tanks had been completed. In the BBMP limits, there are 202 tanks, and a survey of 167 has been completed. Land grabbers had encroached on areas of 96 tanks and recovery has not been completed.

Officials told the Chief Minister that land grabbers had encroached land of 11,212 tanks and encroachment of 5,967 tanks had been cleared. With regard to small tanks, encroached land of 166 tanks would be recovered, the officials said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Tender Call Notice
E-mail: rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle - 01/2025-26 Memo No -1019 Dt.16/04/2025
The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road work as detailed in the table below:
1. Nature of Work : Road Work
2. No of Work : 1 No
3. Tender Cost : Rs.10000.00 (On-Line)
4. Class of Contractor : B & A Class
5. Available of Bid document in the Website : From 10.00 AM of Dt.23.04.2025 up to 05.00 PM of Dt.07.05.2025 up to 5.00 PM
6. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.08.05.2025 at 11.30 AM
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website:https://tenderodisha.gov.in. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.
Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha
B-45 : OIPR-34127/11/0036/2526

Email ID: serw _sundargarh@gmail.com
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : SUNDARGARH
Bid Identification No. Online-PMGSY/RWCCESNG-02 of 2025-26
Letter No. 1100 // Date: 21/04/2025
1. Name of the work :- Construction of Road and CD work under PM-JANMAN Batch-I.
2. Total No. of Packages :- 1 No. individual Package
3. Estimated Cost of individual packages :- Rs.157.49 lakh
4 Period of completion :- Six Calendar months
5. Other details

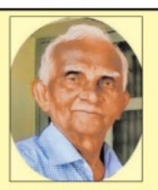
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of Packages	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To	Date & Time of Technical Bid opening	Date & Time of Financial Bid opening
1	2	3	4	5		6
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	PMGSY / RWCCSNG-02 of 2025-26	1 No	25.04.2025 at 11:00 AM	09.05.2025 upto 5:00 PM	13.05.2025 at 11:00 AM	Will be intimated separately

● Further details can be seen from the website www.pmgsytenders.gov.in
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh.
O-75: OIPR-25133/11/0050/2526

Government of Karnataka
Office of the State Mission Director,
Swachh Bharath Mission (Urban) Bengaluru.
9th Floor Vishweshwaraih Towers, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore 560001.
Telephone: 080- 22867172 / 22866302, Fax: 080-22863576 /22861665
Email: swmcelldma@gmail.com, dmablr@gmail.com.
Ref. No.: 1127929/DMA/SWM/32/2023 Date: 22.04.2025
Tender Notification
The Superintending Engineer, Directorate of Municipal Administration, Bengaluru invites tenders for , "Request For Proposal (RFP) for Selection of an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Agency including Digital, Creative and Social Media for State Mission Director, SBM(U), UDD, Bengaluru, Karnataka, .Indent No.DMA/2025-26/SE5213, EMD of **Rs.1.02 Lakhs,** Interested Consultants/Firms/companies may submit their bid proposals along with requisite EMD electronically through KPP platform at **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in,** The method of selection of Project Development and Management Consultants will be Quality and cost based selection(QCBS) in 2 stage system, namely Technical and Financial, tender documents downloaded from:**22.04.2025 to 07.05.2025**, Pre-bid meeting:**29.04.2025, 11.30 AM** at 10th floor, DMA, Bengaluru, last date for submission of tender documents (online) **07.05.2025 up to 5.30pm,** Opening of tender (Technical bid only) **09.05.2025 at 11.00 AM** onwards. Any Change in the tender conditions and calendar of events will be notified through KPP portal only and will not be published in any newspapers.
Sd/-
Superintending Engineer,
Directorate of Municipal Administration, Bengaluru.
DIPR/CP/315/Zen/2025-26

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



14-09-1931 - 22-04-2025
We regret to announce the passing of Commander
S. WILSON
(Retired Officer, Indian Naval Service)
aged 94, **on April 22, 2025.**
Funeral Details:
The funeral service will be held on April 24, 2025, at 4PM at CSI St. John's Church, New Perungalathur, Chennai.
Deeply Mourned by Children & Grand Children
Ct: 9444195296 / 9791091763

With profound sorrow, we announce the passing of
DWARAK ETHIRAJ
on 16th April 2025.

Inserted by
Gautam Ethiraj and family,
Sheila Mohan and family,
Shabari Sairam and family.
Mobile +91-9021360512

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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Of grasslands, blackbucks, and pastoral nomads

Bengaluru-based natural history filmmaker Sumanth Kuduvalli's *Land of the Blackbuck: A Story of Hope and Resilience,* talks about the species and its link to the grasslands ecosystem

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

My first sighting of a male blackbuck was ethereal. This huge, big male with horns sticking out like swords, body glistening, standing against the sun in the morning," remembers the Bengaluru-based natural history filmmaker and the co-founder of Trailing Wild Productions, Sumanth Kuduvalli. It was in 2013 at Maidanahalli at the Jayamangali Blackbuck Reserve, in Tumakuru. His film *Land of the Blackbuck: A Story of Hope and Resilience,* which premiered in Bengaluru earlier this month, chronicles his long association with the captivating animal.

He knew he wanted to film them even back then, but unfortunately, the idea fizzled out due to unforeseen circumstances. "Then, in 2020, seven years later, an opportunity to revisit that dream cropped up. He had just returned to Bengaluru from North Karnataka, where he was filming hornbills for Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR), when they asked him if there was a pet project that he wanted to do, one that they could support logistically, he recalls. "So, I told them about this blackbuck project."

Little literature

It turned out that JLR had a property in Bidar, and they offered to host him there while he filmed the blackbuck. He began researching for the film, soon realising that there was very little literature about the wildlife of Bidar, except for one paper that H.N. Kumara, a faculty member at the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), had written. "But that was mostly just a reference to Bidar, so I went there, mostly shooting in the dark," says Sumanth, whose film is based on his encounters with the grasslands of Bidar.

It was only when he visited and began talking to its inhabitants that he realised "that the land had more to offer than what could be seen on the surface," he says, recounting the names of some of the people who helped him on this journey, such as Vinay Malge of Team Yuvaa, a volunteer-based organisation based out of Bidar, UNESCO researcher, Majid Labbaf Khaneiki and naturalist Vivek Baburao.

In 2021, he applied for and received a fellowship from Jackson Wild, a nonprofit based out of Wyoming, USA, which describes itself as "an inclusive global forum, inspiring our community, celebrating excellence in storytelling that illuminates our connection to the natural world and collective responsibility to the wild." As part of the fellowship, he attended a workshop where the fellows were mentored by a leading professional in the industry, he says. "I was partnered with a BBC producer and director, Simon Baxter, and then the story started to take shape," relates Sumanth. "We realised that it could be a full-fledged film on grasslands."

In love with the wild

As a child, growing up in Bengaluru, one of Sumanth's favourite hangouts was a patch of swamp on the campus of the Indian Institute of Science. "I studied in the Kendriya Vidyalaya here and would spend a lot of time in this place, watching geckos, frogs, snakes..." he says. "I found refuge in it."

Not surprisingly, he also thoroughly enjoyed watching nature documentaries, which his school made the students watch. "(I was) fascinated to see that something I enjoyed watching in action was happening on TV. And I remember thinking that it was such a beautiful thing to do."

But then Sumanth went on to pursue a degree in engineering. He never, however, lost his fascination with the natural world and, while still a student, began volunteering at the Agumbe Rainforest Research Station (ARR). During one such stint at Agumbe, he met someone who would introduce him to photography - the biologist, broadcaster and photographer, Tim Cockerill.

PHOTOS: SUMANTH KUDUVALLI

"He told me that, without an academic background in wildlife, there was very little chance I could get into the scientific aspect of it. But if I wanted to stick to wildlife, film and photography was one way of doing it," says Sumanth, who went on to do a diploma in documentary filmmaking at the Centre for Research in Art of Film and Television in New Delhi before joining Nikon India Pvt Limited and then branching out as an independent natural history filmmaker in 2015.

Over the last decade or so, Sumanth has been part of various documentary projects, featuring animals like the rhinoceros, mudskippers and the sangai deer before making his directorial debut with the film, The Naga Pride, in 2018, about the community-led conservation of the Amur Falcons of Nagaland. The film, which was part of several international film festivals, was nominated for 12 awards and won the best Indian documentary award at the Nagaon International Film Festival, he says. "In our films, we try to showcase the natural history of a species as well as highlight the conservation issue of a particular landscape," says Sumanth, who co-founded Trailing Wild Productions in 2019. "That way, it becomes more engaging and pertinent."

Open natural ecosystems

The blackbuck, also called the Indian antelope, is a hoofed ruminant found mostly in the open natural ecosystems of India, with a small population in Nepal. While often misidentified as deer, antelopes belong to the same family (Bovidae) as cattle, bison, buffalo, sheep, and goats, with all males and some females sporting simple, unbranched horns, instead of the branched antlers found in the deer family (Cervidae). "As I learnt more about these species and the landscape they live in, I found myself drawn to these animals," says Sumanth.

Sumanth began visiting Bidar to shoot the film in 2021, finishing the filming by 2023, before taking it to the editing table. The 23-minute-long film, which not just focuses on the behaviours of and challenges faced by blackbucks, but also offers scattered glimpses of other animals found in this region, including spiny-tailed lizards, laggar falcon, feral dogs, and wolves, hopes to create more awareness and concern for these "very critical ecosystems."

Pointing to a study published by researchers from the University of California, Davis, Sumanth argues that grasslands are better carbon sinks than forests, since they hold the carbon in the earth below, "unlike trees, which, once they die, when cut down or during a wildfire, release the carbon back into the atmosphere."He adds that in the face of climate change, "it became evident that grasslands have a very important role to play."

Biodiverse ecosystems

Not only are they highly biodiverse ecosystems, but these pasture-rich lands are also home to several nomadic and pastoral communities. "They move from place to place, allowing their sheep or goat to graze, enriching the land with their manure," he says, alluding to the age-old, symbiotic relationship between pastoralists and farmers. "With the reduction of grasslands, these people are finding it hard to move from place to place."

Grasslands also play a vital role in creating an underground water system, essential in a country that relies so much on underground water. Bidar, for instance, has something called the karez (or qanat) water system created by the Bahamani Kings in the 15th century, which the film showcases. "It was a major factor in fighting the drought that North Karnataka went through in 2016 and 17," he says. "When this area was heaving under very bad heat waves, it survived thanks to this."

Sumanth now hopes to travel with the film, with multiple copies in regional languages, to ensure that he can "reach places where it matters." He says he intends to go beyond the film and create a grassland movement, trying to help set communities and individuals they work with resources that can help them scale their conservation work. For instance, he says that in Bidar, Trailing Wild supported local conservationist Vivek Baburao with financial resources and scientific support in conducting a study on the grassland ecosystem. "For us, it is about arming anyone who can make a difference. We all need to join hands and conserve grasslands."

Sumanth Kuduvalli

MATTER launches e-bike AERA in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

MATTER Motor Works, an electric mobility start-up, has launched a geared electric motorbike, AERA, in Bengaluru.

This e-bike is "purpose-built for the Indian rider and fine-tuned for a city like Bengaluru", the company said.

Innovation

Mohal Lalbhai, founder and group CEO of MATTER, said, "There's no better city to lead this journey than Bengaluru, where innovation isn't just an idea, it's a way of life."

AERA is backed by an in-house developed Hypershift manual gearbox, a 4-speed manual transmission in an EV, paired with 3 ride modes: Eco, City and Sport to deliver 12 unique ride combinations, said the company.

The bike also has a liquid-cooled powertrain with advanced liquid cooling on both motor and battery pack for better efficiency in hot, high-traffic conditions.

Its 5kWh battery offers a range of 172 km per charge, according to the company's release.

13th edition of Tiger Cup sees debut of girls' league

This year's tournament will be dedicated to raising awareness on the importance of conserving wildlife

Featuring under-12, under-14, and under-16 categories, matches started with teams from Bengaluru, Mysuru, Dharwad, Koppal and Belgaum participating.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 13th edition of the Tiger Cup 2025, a cricket tournament for the under-12, under-14 and under-16 categories, was inaugurated in Bengaluru, this time with a special announcement on the launch of a girls' cricket tournament.

Scheduled to take place from April 21 to May 13, the tournament, supported by Cycle Pure Agarbathi, began with the lighting of a 6-foot Agarbathi by the girls participating in the tournament. Officials of JSS Academy of Technical Education and cricket expert Joseph Hoover were at the event.

Featuring under-12, under-14, and under-16 categories, matches started at JSS Academy of Technical Education with teams from Bengaluru, Mysuru, Dharwad, Koppal and Belgaum participating.

Awareness on wildlife

Created by renowned cricket players Sandeep Patil, Harbhajan Singh, and Yusuf Pathan, the Tiger Cup Tournament brings 56 talented teams together, including more than 900 players from all around India. According to a press release, the 13th edition of the Tiger Cup 2025 will be dedicated to raising awareness on the importance of conserving wildlife.

The proceeds of the event will be donated towards forest foot soldiers for their commendable service in protecting the forests and wildlife in the country, the release noted.

On the final day of the tournament, ₹1 lakh each will be awarded to two forest staff from Karnataka, one from Kerala, and one from Tamil Nadu, to honour their dedication to wildlife conservation. Additionally, Rs. 1 lakh has been earmarked to support the participation of girls in the tournament.

Inclusive spirit

Speaking on the occasion, Arjun Ranga, Managing Director of Cycle Pure Agarbathi, said, "We are proud to host the 13th edition of the Tiger Cup 2025, which, for the first time, includes felicitation of the forest staff and a dedicated girls' cricket category. At Cycle Pure Agarbathi, we believe that sports play a pivotal role in shaping young lives, and through this initiative, we are committed to creating new opportunities for aspiring female cricketers. The tournament also continues to honour the unwavering dedication of our forest staff, who work relentlessly to protect India's rich biodiversity."

Hoover noted that the Tiger Cup 2025 is a celebration of budding cricketing talent.

"It's wonderful to see the inclusion of the 'girls' category' in this edition. It reflects the true spirit of the sport - one that's inclusive, inspiring and full of opportunity. It's been a privilege to witness young talents take their first steps towards greatness through this platform, and I wish them all the best in their journey ahead," Hoover said.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 23, 1975

KGF Workers March to Bangalore to meet CM

Kolar Gold Fields, April 22: About 2,000 workers of the Bharat Gold Mines Limited marched through the mining and non-mining areas and proceeded to Bangalore on a padayatra to meet the Karnataka Chief Minister and Labour Minister to press their demand for wage revision.

On their way to Bangalore, the Bharat Earth Movers Employees' Association-President, Mr. Narayanan presented a sum of Rs. 2,201 collected from the workers of the BEML as a gesture of their support to the striking mine workers. The 12,000 workers of Bharat Gold Mines Limited are on strike from March 31.

Need to Rejuvenate Family Planning Programme

Bangalore, April 22: The Health Minister, Mr. Siddaveerappa, regretted here today that the family planning programme had not brought about the desired results, though it was proclaimed as an official programme as early as 1951.

Inaugurating the Population Centre at the K.C. General Hospital in Malleswaram.

Mr. Siddavaerappa expressed the urgent need to rejuvenate the programme for achieving better results and expressed the hope that it would be made acceptable to the people through the India Population Project.

He wanted various strategies to be adopted for educating the people, especially women, to undergo compulsory sterilisation after the birth of the third child.

Once upon a time Kyrgyz filmmaker Dastan Zhapar (below left), and at the shooting of his movies. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Story within a story

Kyrgyz filmmaker Dastan Zhapar's first independent work, *Deal at the Border,* was screened at the recent Bangalore International Film Festival. He talks about his work and process...

Shankar M K

Kyrgyz filmmaker Dastan Zhapar's work is a profound meditation on his society's shifting relationship with the past and the evolving landscape of Kyrgyzstan's traditions. At the heart of his cinematic exploration is death, through which he examines societal ruptures and continuities, and reimagines a future.

Kyrgyz society, like other societies previously part of the Soviet Union, has had to deal with three traditions – pre-Soviet, Soviet socialist, and contemporary.

Dastan made *A Father's Will* in 2016 and *Road to Eden* in 2020, both in collaboration with fellow filmmaker Bakyt Mukul. *A Father's Will* won the Golden Zenith at the 40th Montreal World Film Festival. *Deal at the Border*, screened at the recent Bangalore International Film Festival, is Zhapar's first independent work.

While *A Father's Will* was about how reviving an old death ritual helped pacify people defrauded by a man now deceased, *Road to Eden* reflected on the loss of meaning caused by material compulsions of modern life. With *Deal at the Border*, Dastan turns to even darker realities – modern slavery and human rights issues.

As an amorphous repository of attitudes, practices, and relational hierarchies, a tradition never truly dies. In Dastan's films, two traditions reside within the present – struggling for attention and validation. The resonances of this exploration are impossible to miss in India, bogged down by a similar contest between putative traditions.

In an exclusive, Dastan shares his thoughts on the many issues of idea, ideology and creative expression. Excerpts:

Why is it that you question some traditions and try to restore respect for others?

It is true that I am questioning some traditions, but I am not seeking to restore respect for others. Things emerge in the process of scripting and filming. They beg to be projected on the screen and I am persuaded by this kind of insight.

Death and how people respond to it seems to be a common theme in all your films.

That is right. However, it was not by conscious design – it turned out that way. Death occupied centrestage and spliced three of my films into an unintended trilogy. However, the ideas I am now working on are about survival and the desire for freedom.

A Father's Will plays out an aspect of the Kyrgyz attitude to death. People at a burial desire closure. They want to accept and forgive. Also, they like to ask what kind of a person the deceased was as a prelude to restoring dignity to the dead. These rituals serve to unite people, especially family, in times of sorrow.

Why is the yurt (a portable, circular dwelling, traditionally used by nomadic people in Central Asia) so important?

The Kyrgyz had a nomadic, mobile way of life. The yurt naturally became home and a symbol of family stability. It also represents the strength of the national collective, serving a material function and as a spiritual metaphor.

***A Father's Will* turns out to be based on a book written by a character in *The Road to Eden*...**

When Bakyt Mukul and I wrote the script for *A Father's Will*, we thought it would be nice to have a literary work associated with the film's story. When we were scripting for *The Road to Eden*, and came up with the image of the sick writer Sapar, we thought he could write, for example, a book titled *The Father's Testament* referring to our previous film. In this way, we would have an imaginary author for an imaginary book on which our first film had been based. In this fashion, we were able to thematically unite the two films. The stories take place in the same universe, same ethical ecosystem.

What is your next film about?

I am actively working on three ideas. One is the story of guards at the border of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Another is about modern slavery.

Why is slavery a subtext of *Deal at the Border*?

Slavery has been on my mind for a long time as I have been personally affected by it. My brother Aktan was enslaved in a neighbouring country with our uncle. Luckily, they managed to escape. The script was written by Aktan and I.

While writing the script, I studied modern slavery. I learnt that Kyrgyzstan ranks first among Central Asian countries whose citizens are enslaved abroad, mostly in Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey and the UAE. According to the International Labour Organisation, more than 50 million people are currently enslaved worldwide and 70% of them are women. These statistics are horrifying. We must bring this to the notice of viewers everywhere.

From what sources do you draw inspiration from?

Definitely from the Kyrgyz epic of *Manas*. It is a poem with more than 1,50,000 verses. It is about the legendary past of many nations of Central Asia, including the Mongol, Kitai, and Altai.

Newspaper reports often provide a starting point for an episode. I am also inspired by themes other directors explore. The most important thing is to select the right theme or story. The story must resonate in you. It must refer to some piece of today's reality or to a possible state of affairs in the future.

I prefer to make films about the rural and remote regions, though cities have their stories too. I ride the bus and observe people as they travel and converse. I can learn much about their troubles and what makes them happy. I dig into real life material so I can use them in my films.

What are your thoughts on Indian cinema?

I am in awe of Indian films screened at international film festivals – they deal with serious issues in interesting ways. I would like to be involved in a joint venture with India sometime in the future. The first Kyrgyz feature film was made in 1958, by which time Indian cinema was already in bloom.

Are you responding to any particular filmmaking tradition?

I like the image of Duishen, the teacher created by Kyrgyz author Chingiz Aitmatov in his novel *First Teacher* that was later made into a film. Duishen brings knowledge and knowledge is light, pulling millions of people out of the darkness of ignorance. Duishen had a fanatic faith in a bright future ushered in by literacy and education. Eventually that is what led mankind to seemingly impossible things such as space exploration. I believe such people are in short supply in our crazy world today.

Tune into harmony The Cecilian Choir and (below) Arthur B Pais
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A choir for a cause

Shilpa Anandraj

One of Bengaluru's oldest choirs, The Cecilian Choir, will perform for a fundraiser in Bengaluru. Titled *Memories Are Made of This,* it is a fundraiser for St. Joseph's University Scholarship Programs. The Cecilian Choir was started in 1982 by a group of musicians under the leadership of Reverend Dr Theodore Pereira.

This year, the concert will be held at St. Joseph's Auditorium, and offers financial assistance to students who come from economically weaker sections of society, says Arthur B Pais, President, Cecilian Choir.

The choir, he says, has been around for 42 years. "We are probably the longest serving choir in Bengaluru and intend to keep this legacy going. All our stage performances are fundraisers."

Arthur describes each of the choir's fundraisers as a worthy cause and over the years Cecilian Choir has helped raised funds for Multiple Sclerosis Society, Maria Seva Sangha, Abala Ashraya Sangha, Atma Shakti Vidyala Society, The Karunashraya Hospice, St Mary's Orphanage, Sumanahalli Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre, The Association of People with Disability and Jeevarathani Foundation.

"In fact, when Karunahsraya started, we helped raise funds for their infrastructure. The concert was held at Guru Nanak Bhavan," recalls Arthur.

Besides these, Arthur says some of their memorable performances include the 1999 concert at the invitation of Ministry of Tourism, Israel to perform at the Sherovah Theatre in Jerusalem and at a monastery in Nazareth for the millennium celebrations; and the 2011 concert presented by Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Bangalore School of Music (BSM); in the presence of the ex-President of India, Pratibha Patil.

"We were the only choir to have ever sung a song in Kannada at the Rashtrapati Bhavan," shares the chorister.

St Joseph's University, Arthur says, help students with excellent academic records, high achievers, and differently-abled students. "The university also has study and residential scholarships, besides giving them midday meals, which most of the time, is the only meal some students get due to their financial situation. That's who we are singing for."

The first half of the concert, Arthur says, will feature music across eight decades. "There will be a Broadway musical medley, jazz, ballads and masterpieces, some of which, will be a cappella. The second half includes 'Remember the Cross' an Easter Cantata that intertwines songs from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday in a blended and contemporary setting".

The choir will be conducted by Deirdre Fernandes-Dominic and will have Rebecca Thomas-Colaco (piano), Justin A Santosh (drums), Eric Samuel (guitar), Pearl Mukadam (bass), Darren Sherwin and Sabarish R (keyboards) and 25 choristers.

Singing in harmony, says Arthur, is nothing like a band performance. "We are a choir and sing in multi-part harmony, which could be either a three, four, six or eight-part. When we say 'harmony', I strongly believe one has to experience it to know how a voice can modulate itself and give you different tones, which leads to a fantastic experience."

Arthur is a first tenor, and has been singing with the since 2000. "Rebecca who has been with us since 2005, now is the director of faculty too with the Bangalore School of Music."

Arthur took to music as a young boy and started singing in his church choir. "That is where you get noticed by conductors and are picked up for choral singing. For me, choral singing came naturally and I found it easy to pick it up."

The concert is on April 26 and 27, at 3.30pm and 6.30pm at St Joseph's University Auditorium, 36 Lalbagh Road. *Donor passes on BookMyShow.*

A sincere ode to Yakshagana

FILM REVIEW

Vivek MV

Lost in translation A still from *Veera Chandrahasa*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Early into *Veera Chandrahasa,* it is natural to feel like you are watching a night-long performance of *Yakshagana,* the ancient coastal art form. A couple of scenes play out for so long, perhaps for 15 minutes or more, that they feel like they are straight out of a stage play. In that sense, the movie is a sincere ode to Yakshagana.

Music composer Ravi Basrur, famous for *KGF* and *Salaar,* has donned the hat of a director in *Veera Chandrahasa*. Basrur narrates the tale of Chandrahasa – the popular story of an orphan who becomes the king of the Kuntala Kingdom in Hindu mythology – in the form of a Yakshagana performance.

For a while, the experimental take feels immersive. However, the novelty doesn't last long. *Veera Chandrahasa* lacks essential cinematic elements to remain engaging throughout its runtime (20 minutes shy of three hours). The film, which benefits from its sparks of humour, could have been a character study of the central character Chandrahasa. The straightforward narration of an age-old tale and the rudimentary treatment of the screenplay makes the movie appear a tad dated.

Veera Chandrahasa (Kannada)
Director: Ravi Basrur
Cast: Sthithil Shetty, Prasanna Shettigar, Nagashree GS, Shivarajkumar, Uday Kadabal
Runtime: 160 minutes
Storyline: In the Kundala Kingdom, raised with love, Chandrahasa grows into a virtuous young man, unaware of the powerful enemies plotting against him

Basrur's no-holds-barred music swings between vibrant and ear-splitting. The sound mixing keeps the spirit of Yakshagana alive, doing justice to the movie's theme. The fine performances do justice to the rhythm of a Yakshagana show, with Prasanna Shettigar, playing the antagonist Dhushtabuddhi, standing out. Shivarajkumar uses his vast experience to bring a royal touch to his cameo.

The film's climax reminds you of *Kantara* (2022). Basrur goes for the same visceral impact of the final portions of Rishab Shetty's film and almost pulls it off. But the monotonic buildup to the final act means you aren't as gripped as you were while watching *Kantara*.

Basrur plays to his strengths, but the film could have benefited from some risk taking. The shoddy VFX and the dull action sequences prove that the movie required a bigger canvas.

What if a modern-day conflict was reflected with Yakshagana as a tool? Perhaps Basrur and his team can explore this concept for a future attempt.

Veera Chandrahasa is currently running in theatres

CITYBEATS

Bookmarked!

APRIL 26
Tulika Books has launched *Go Go Flamingo!* with illustrator Priya Kuriyan and writer Devashish Makhija. The book talks about the violence humans inflict on the natural world through hazardous waste. It is about a flock of flamingos that flies south in search of food and drink and what they find in the water.
At Atta Galatta, Indiranagar, 2.30pm. Open for children aged six years and above. Tickets on BookMyShow.

Binge on

ONGOING
Ironhill India is serving an 'Ultimate Match-Day Feast' with its all-new IPL menu. Every dish is a tribute to the teams with RCB - The Fiery Fusion (Bengaluru fried chicken kebab with a spicy twist), DC - The Street Food Kings (Chandni Chowk-style papadi chaat), KKR - The Bengali Bliss (mustard-marinated kasundi fish) and more.
On at Ironhill Bengaluru, Marathahalli. Call 9606044623 / 24 for details.

Summer indulgence

ONGOING
Magnolia Bakery has launched a limited edition dessert menu revolving around mangoes. Some of the highlights include mango jamboree (a creamy dessert with a pecan shortbread crust, whipped cream and cream cheese), mango pudding parfait (made with coconut cake and whipped cream) and vanilla cheesecake with mango toppings to name a few.
At all Magnolia outlets in the city.

T.N. order doesn't apply to Kerala: govt. to SC

Centre says difference in cases of the two States lay 'essentially in the facts'; court fixes the case for May 6, says it will look into the entirety of the issue; in an April 8 judgment, it had mandated Governors and the President to decide on pending State Bills within a maximum of three months

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Centre maintained in the Supreme Court on Tuesday that a judgment delivered on April 8 in a case filed by the State of Tamil Nadu, mandating Governors and the President to decide on pending State Bills within a maximum of three months, would not apply to neighbouring Kerala.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi was told by both Attorney-General R. Venkataramani and Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta that the facts of Tamil Nadu's case against the delay caused by its Governor R.N. Ravi in clearing 10 re-passed Bills did not "cover" Kerala. Mr. Mehta said the government was still studying the April 8 Tamil Nadu Governor case judgment, and sought an adjournment. The case was scheduled for detailed hearing on May 6.

Justice Narasimha said the court would look into the entirety of the issue, especially if the Tamil Nadu Governor case judgment applied to Kerala. Article 141 of the Constitution mandates that the law declared by the Supreme Court in a judgment is binding.

Mr. Venkataramani said the difference in the cases of the two States lay "essentially in the facts".

Senior advocate K.K. Venugopal and advocate C.K. Sasi said the maximum three-month deadline set by the Supreme Court in the April 8 judgment for Governors and the President to decide whether or not to grant assent to Bills would apply across States.

All the Centre had to say in court was whether the Kerala Governor was bound by the Supreme Court timelines, Mr. Venugopal submitted.

The April 8 judgment had interpreted Article 200 of the Constitution, which related to the grant of assent by Governors to Bills passed by State Legislatures. The court had said that Governors must look within themselves and reflect on whether their actions were in line with the Constitutional ethos and aspirations of the people. Delaying assent indefinitely on Bills passed by the State Legislature reduced these proposed laws, which voiced the aspirations of the people, into mere pieces of paper, it said.

Kerala's case against its Governor dates back to over two years. In a hearing on November 20, 2023, Mr. Venugopal had said eight key Bills were pending for eight to 23 months with the Governor.

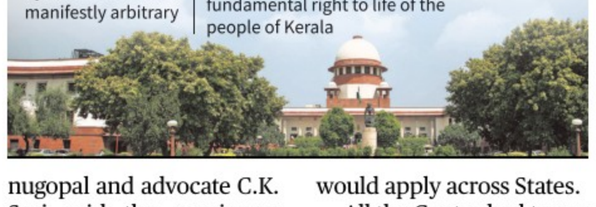
On the next court hearing on November 29, 2023, Kerala had informed the court that the Governor had assented to one Bill and referred the remaining seven to the President for consideration.

Mr. Venugopal had, however, demanded in court that the Governor explain if the seven Bills referred to the President had violated Article 254 (inconsistency between Central and State laws) or whether they had trenched into the Union List. The advocate had argued that constitutional authorities could not afford to exercise power arbitrarily.

Ongoing issue

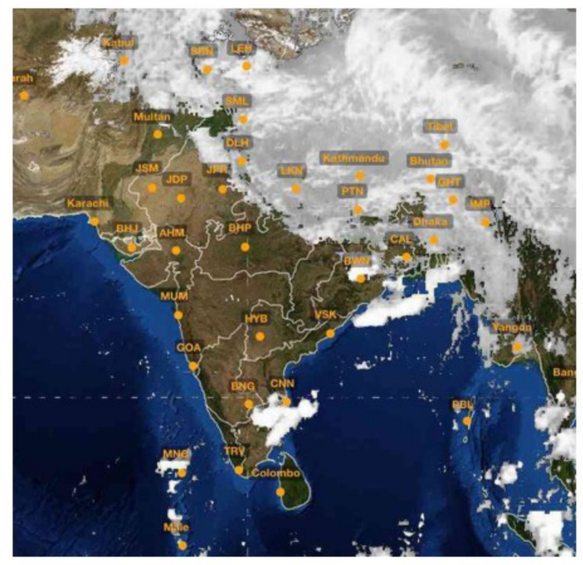
Kerala's case against its Governor dates back to over two years

- Kerala had argued in the Supreme Court that keeping Bills pending for long and indefinite periods of time by Governors is manifestly arbitrary
- A Governor is a part of the State Legislature under Article 168 of the Constitution and cannot act in a way contrary to the wishes of the elected representatives of the people
- By sitting on Bills, Governor tried to 'defeat the rights of the people'. An arbitrary show of lack of urgency by the Governor violated the fundamental right to life of the people of Kerala



WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Sikkim, West Bengal, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Karnataka and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.0	24.6	Kozhikode	—	37.5	28.4
Ahmedabad	—	41.9	23.9	Kurnool	—	41.7	28.2
Aizawl	0.9	33.2	20.0	Lucknow	—	41.4	25.4
Allahabad	—	43.1	26.2	Madurai	—	39.0	27.2
Bengaluru	—	34.4	21.5	Mangaluru	—	34.2	25.0
Bhopal	—	41.2	21.5	Mumbai	—	34.9	23.5
Bhubaneswar	—	36.7	27.9	Mysuru	—	34.0	21.6
Chandigarh	—	38.7	23.5	New Delhi	—	39.9	20.9
Chennai	—	34.6	28.1	Patna	—	40.5	28.2
Coimbatore	—	36.6	25.4	Port Blair	1	32.0	25.5
Dehradun	—	37.5	21.3	Puducherry	—	36.0	28.0
Gangtok	70	23.0	15.4	Pune	—	43.2	26.1
Goa	—	37.0	28.0	Raipur	—	44.4	29.3
Guwahati	1	30.4	24.2	Ranchi	—	39.0	23.4
Hubballi	—	39.0	23.0	Shillong	—	26.0	17.0
Hyderabad	—	39.4	26.1	Shimla	3	28.2	17.0
Imphal	3	28.1	20.1	Srinagar	—	22.6	7.6
Jaipur	—	40.1	26.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.6	27.6
Kochi	0.4	32.6	27.0	Tiruchi	—	38.9	27.6
Kohima	13.0	20.0	15.6	Vijayawada	—	39.6	27.2
Kolkata	—	37.4	29.0	Visakhapatnam	—	34.1	28.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.10	.64	20	160	132	
Bengaluru	—	.17	38	143	168	
Chennai	5	6	34	38	78	
Delhi	.41	.66	15	221	357	
Hyderabad	7	.33	45	60	120	
Kolkata	5	.15	22	83	87	
Lucknow	.11	.70	54	232	205	
Mumbai	2	.36	30	73	125	
Pune	8	.59	15	175	130	
Visakhapatnam	.10	.35	19	70	131	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 334 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Ex-intelligence chief held in actor 'harassment' case

Rajulapudi Srinivas
VIJAYAWADA

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) police, who on Tuesday arrested former Intelligence Director-General P. Sitarama Anjaneyulu in actor Kadambari Jethwani's harassment case, questioned the officer for about five hours.

Earlier, the Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department Police took Mr. Anjaneyulu into custody from his residence at Hyderabad.

"The CID police searched the house of Mr. Anjaneyulu in Hyderabad. He will be produced in a court in Vijayawada after a thorough questioning," a police officer said.

Following a complaint lodged by Ms. Kadambari in September last year, the police registered a case against prime accused Kukkala Vidyasagar, Mr. Anjaneyulu, Vijayawada Police Commissioner Kanthi Rana Tata, Deputy Commissioner of Police Vishal Gunni, West Zone Assistant Commissioner of Police K. Hanumantha Rao and Ibrahimpatnam Circle Inspector M. Satyanarayana and others.

The actor alleged that the police officers colluded with Mr. Vidyasagar, foisted a false case against her and her family members, arrested them illegally and harassed her family members.

In February 2024, the police picked up the actress and her parents from Mumbai, brought them to Vijayawada and produced them in a court, which remanded them in judicial custody.

Murders in Kerala's Amayur: no death penalty for convict

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday commuted the death penalty of Reji Kumar in the Amayur multiple murder case in Kerala to imprisonment till the end of his life.

A three-judge Special Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta took into account mitigating factors like no prior antecedents of the convict, his good conduct for the past 16-17 years of incarceration, mental health issues and consistent efforts to be a model prisoner to remove him from the death row.

Forensic evidence

Kumar was found guilty of killing his wife and four children (three daughters and a son, aged between three and 12). Forensic evidence found that he had raped his eldest daughter.

Justice Karol began the 17-page judgment by introducing the case as that of a "husband and father who had forgotten all propriety, morality and responsibility toward his family members".

"We are left to wonder as to how someone who is supposed to feel the utmost love, care and affection for the young lives could have come to commit such a crime by which the lights of these lives have been extinguished in the most brutal of manners," Justice Karol wrote.

Kumar, an agricultural worker, had moved the Supreme Court after the Sessions Court sentenced him to death for multiple murders and rape.

INBRIEF

ED summons Mahesh Babu for questioning in PMLA case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned actor Mahesh Babu for questioning on April 28 in a money laundering probe involving Hyderabad-based Sai Surya Developers and the Surana Group. The ED is investigating examining Mr. Mahesh Babu's financial transactions with Sai Surya Developers as part of its money laundering probe – specifically focusing on the ₹2.5 crore in cash payments he allegedly received, as part of a ₹5.9 crore endorsement deal. The investigators suspect the cash may have originated from funds collected from investors. The ED initiated its probe following multiple FIRs registered against company directors for allegedly duping investors.

Devotees get stuck in lift, rescued safely in Tirumala

A couple of devotees got trapped in a lift at Govinda Sai guest house in Tirumala due to a disruption in the power supply, leaving the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) personnel tensed for sometime.

Alarmed by the incident, the guest house staff promptly responded to the situation and commissioned technicians, who rescued them in quick time.

Bomb threat at Kerala High Court turns out to be 'hoax'

A bomb threat by email was received at the Kerala High Court on Tuesday afternoon, following which the security personnel at the court carried out inspections and ruled it out as a "hoax", police sources said. The court registrar received the threatening email, following which the Kochi City police were alerted. But a detailed examination of the court premises found nothing suspicious, the police said. Later, the security arrangements at the High Court were tightened. *(With PTI inputs)*

Mango mania

Postal employees in Bengaluru display 3-kg mango boxes packed by farmers from Kolar and Chickballapur, as India Post began door delivery of chemical-free mangoes in partnership with the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation. K. MURALI KUMAR

44°C in Adilabad makes it Telangana's hottest

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana continues to reel under intense heat as mercury levels surged past the 40°C mark across all 33 districts on Monday. Adilabad emerged as the hottest location in the State, recording a maximum temperature of 44°C, according to data from the Telangana Development Planning Society (TGDPS).

Close on Adilabad's heels were Nirmal at 43.9°C, Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, Jagtial and Jogulamba Gadwal at 43.8°C, while Mancherial and Nizamabad recorded 43.7°C. Kamareddy logged 43.6°C, followed by Karimnagar and Rajanna Sircilla at 43.5°C, and Peddapalli at 43.4°C. The remaining 23 districts reported temperatures between 40°C and 43°C.

The soaring heat spared neither urban nor semi-urban areas. Medchal Malkajgiri reported a maximum temperature of 42.4°C, while Hyderabad sweltered at 41.6°C.

In light of the rising temperatures, the India Meteorological Department has issued a heatwave warning for several districts from Wednesday to Friday. Heatwave conditions are likely to prevail in Adilabad, Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, and Nirmal districts on Wednesday.

The warning extends to include Nizamabad and Jagtial on April 24 and continues for the same districts on April 25.

Major tribal housing project gets under way in Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday opened one of the largest tribal settlement projects in the State at Paroorkunnu, Meppadi in Wayanad.

According to a release, 123 Scheduled Tribe families will receive houses under the project. Keys were handed over to some beneficiaries at an event held at Kalpetta to mark the fourth anniversary of the second LDF government. The beneficiaries belong to the Meppadi, Muttil, and Muppainad grama panchayats.

Each house, built on 10 cents of land, has a total area of 480 sq. ft and includes two bedrooms, a hall, a kitchen, and bathrooms.

Mr. Vijayan said at the event that there were no remaining hurdles for the proposed township for survivors of the Mundakkai-Chooralmala landslides.

"Though the High Court had supported the government's stance, there were apprehensions after some parties approached the Supreme Court. Now, even those have been cleared," he said.

He said that it would be completed as per the scheduled plan.

Grand launch: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan during the inauguration of a tribal resettlement project in Wayanad. PTI

Naidu meets Union Ministers, seeks Centre's support for key projects

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu discussed the various projects and Central schemes with several Union Ministers in New Delhi on Tuesday and raised key issues such as Godavari-Banakacherla project, problems faced by aquaculture farmers due to the tariffs imposed by the U.S.A.

Mr. Naidu met Home Minister Amit Shah and apprised him of several key initiatives undertaken by the State government and sought support for their smooth implementation.

During his meeting with Union Minister for Jal Shakti C.R. Patil, Mr. Naidu discussed the allocation of Central funds for the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme.

Expressing the State's intention to extensively implement the Central scheme, the Chief Minister emphasised the need for timely release of funds.

Explaining to the Union Minister about the proposed Godavari-Banakacherla linkage project, which aims to make Andhra Pradesh drought-free, Mr. Naidu requested support of the Centre.

Mr. Naidu also outlined the benefits of the project and explained its significance to the Union Minister. Additionally, discussions were held on the Atal Bhujal Yojana, during which Mr. Naidu highlighted the State government's initiatives to improve groundwater levels and sought Central funding for it.

The Chief Minister met Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and discussed the establishment of a Bench of Andhra Pradesh High Court in Kurnool. He urged the Centre to initiate the necessary procedures and extend cooperation.

U.S. tariff on seafood

Mr. Naidu, in a meeting with Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, discussed the challenges faced by the aquaculture sector in Andhra Pradesh due to the tariff imposed by the U.S.

He pointed out that the 26% tariff imposed on Indian seafood had severely impacted the State's aquaculture industry.

Matters that count

Attempts to intimidate the judiciary pose a threat to democracy

The Supreme Court of India has been subjected to unfounded criticism by sections of the ruling BJP, and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, with regard to the separation of powers between the various branches of the government, and the principle of checks and balances. Not surprisingly, a Supreme Court bench took note of the charge that it was intruding into executive and legislative functions. In one petition, the Court was urged to direct the Centre to act under Articles 355 and 356 to deal with the situation of violence in West Bengal. In another, the Court's intervention was sought to curtail obscene content on online platforms. The Calcutta High Court had earlier ordered the deployment of Central forces to stem violence in Murshidabad in West Bengal. Judicial review of legislative and executive decisions is an integral part of India's constitutional democracy. Decisions of the executive and the legislature can be examined by the judiciary to determine whether they are consistent with the Constitution, and even constitutional amendments are subject to the 'basic structure' test. There are multiple constitutional avenues for judicial intervention in the making and enforcement of law. Article 13 gives the judiciary the power to strike down laws that are violating fundamental rights. Articles 32 and 226 give the Supreme Court and High Courts, respectively, the power to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights, and beyond.

The notion that the judiciary is subservient to legislature is out of line with the constitutional scheme. In fact, the judiciary is expected to insulate the rule of law from the pressure of public opinion that members of the legislature represent. It is in this constructive friction between various institutions of the state that a society can achieve stability in governance. The argument that legislatures can pass any law on the basis of a majority is a majoritarian argument. The erasure of the distinction between the executive and legislature has already created a crisis of accountability in governance at the national and State level in India. The attempt to intimidate the judiciary in the name of legislative supremacy is a threat to democracy – not its furtherance. In the recent judgment that set timelines for the Governor and President for acting on laws passed by the Assembly, the Supreme Court restored the authority of the elected legislatures, which was being trampled upon by an unelected Governor and arbitrary actions by the President. The critics of the judiciary miss this point altogether.

Opposing imposition

Hindi can be promoted without making it mandatory

The announcement of the BJP-led government in Maharashtra that English and Marathi medium schools will begin teaching Hindi as a third language from Class 1, as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, is running into significant political opposition. Previously, Hindi was introduced as a third language only from Class 6 onwards. Schools with other mediums of instruction have already been following the three-language formula from Class 1. While some view the announcement as an instance of Hindi imposition, others fear its potential in undermining Marathi. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis defended the move, stating that Hindi serves as an acceptable language of communication across India. But there are concerns about the practical challenges of this mandate: the extensive logistics involved in teacher recruitment and training, besides salary costs. Media reports and social media chatter have pointed to an emerging hostility towards Hindi, which could be a response to the perceived imposition. There is resentment that the move is an effort to appease the sizeable population of native Hindi speakers settled in Maharashtra. Historically, the State has witnessed a strong regional political identity, epitomised by the Shiv Sena since the 1960s. This identity has emphasised Marathi pride, cultural assertion, and prioritisation of local employment. Yet, unlike Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra has not exhibited overt hostility towards Hindi. Even the Shiv Sena, which has targeted various groups – south Indians, Muslims, and north Indian migrant workers – at different times, did not cultivate animosity towards Hindi. The current resentment, therefore, seems less organic and more a product of the BJP's centralising agenda, which seeks uniformity in a culturally and linguistically diverse nation.

While the Constitution is unitary in structure, it recognises and accommodates diversity in numerous ways. Previous centralising efforts by Congress governments included the promotion of Hindi, but there was enough institutional flexibility to balance divergent interests. Though the BJP now governs with a reduced mandate, it has managed to secure support from allies for its centralising vision, provoking resistance in States such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Meanwhile, the educational landscape is undergoing a radical transformation with developments in AI and neuroscience. Instead of creating divisions, the Fadnavis government would do well to build consensus to address the evolving demands of school and higher education.

A move that endangers the right to vote

John Simte

Lawyer and legal researcher

The Election Commission of India (ECI)'s renewed push to link Aadhaar with voter ID endangers the right to vote. It is being justified as a measure to clean electoral rolls, eliminate bogus voters, and improve electoral integrity. Yet, experience and data show that Aadhaar linkage has resulted in mass disenfranchisement, systemic errors, exclusions, arbitrary welfare disentitlements, and far-reaching infringements on the fundamental right to privacy of citizens.

Questionable claims

The claim that Aadhaar-voter ID linkage is voluntary is questionable. Presently, Form 6B offers no meaningful opt-out – voters must either submit their Aadhaar number or declare they do not have one, coercing even those unwilling to share it into compliance. Unsurprisingly, by September 2023, over 66 crore Aadhaar numbers had already been seeded. This was enabled not only by a coercive legal framework but also by data-sharing practices of questionable legality and constitutional, ethical propriety. These included the use of the DBT Seeding Data Viewer, which permits third-party access to non-biometric identity data held by UIDAI, as well as the repurposing of data collected for the National Population Register and by other government departments for unrelated administrative purposes.

The ECI's latest proposal fails to rectify this position. On the contrary, it makes the process more restrictive by requiring citizen-voters who do not provide Aadhaar to physically appear before an Electoral Registration Officer to justify their decision. In 2023, in *G. Niranjan v. Election Commission of India*, the ECI had assured the Supreme Court that Aadhaar-voter ID linkage is not mandatory and that appropriate clarifications would be introduced for that purpose; its latest proposal walks back on this commitment.

The new proposal also erodes the commitment to universal and equal suffrage by imposing barriers on those unwilling or unable to furnish Aadhaar. It places a disproportionate burden on the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and individuals in remote areas for whom attending an in-person hearing before the Electoral Registration Officer is often neither practical nor reasonable. This not only compromises individual dignity but also diminishes the trust that is foundational to democratic participation.

The problem is further exacerbated by the lack of a clear, accessible, and time-bound appellate mechanism for the citizen-voter, if their justification for not submitting Aadhaar is arbitrarily rejected. The Supreme Court, in *Lal Babu Hussein and Others v. Electoral Registration Officer* (1995), unequivocally held that any decision to delete a name from the electoral roll must comply with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

> Instead of pushing a technological fix and infringing on the right to privacy of citizens, the ECI must focus on strengthening traditional, time-tested methods of voter verification

The Union government and the ECI argue that Aadhaar-voter ID linkage will eliminate duplicate voters and electoral fraud. However, this claim does not withstand scrutiny. Aadhaar was never designed to serve as proof of citizenship. Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016, explicitly states that Aadhaar is a residency-based identification system, which means that an Aadhaar holder may not necessarily be an Indian citizen. Multiple High Courts have ruled that Aadhaar is not proof of Indian citizenship. The UIDAI itself has affirmed that even non-citizens residing in India for 182 days are eligible for Aadhaar. Importantly, the Supreme Court in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India* (2018) had limited the use of Aadhaar for welfare programmes paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India per Section 7 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016.

By linking Aadhaar with the voter ID, the ECI is creating a mechanism that introduces an unreliable filter into the electoral process, risks mass disenfranchisement of citizen-voters, and eroding the sanctity of universal suffrage and democratic participation guaranteed by the Constitution. These dangers are not hypothetical; they have been documented. In 2015, the ECI attempted a similar Aadhaar-voter ID linkage under the National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme. As a result, in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh alone, 55 lakh voters were arbitrarily removed from electoral rolls due to Aadhaar mismatches. Voters discovered their names missing only when they arrived at polling stations on election day. The ECI was forced to abandon the exercise after the Supreme Court issued a stay through its August 11, 2015 order.

Aadhaar-voter ID linkage also poses a severe risk of dragnet surveillance and voter profiling. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, contains sweeping exemptions for government entities, raising the possibility that voter data could be accessed and exploited for political purposes. Once Aadhaar is linked to voter IDs, it becomes possible to cross-reference electoral data with other databases, allowing ruling parties to monitor voter demographics. The implications are concerning. Political actors could use this data to micro-target voters, suppress opposition strongholds, or even manipulate electoral rolls to achieve predetermined electoral outcomes.

Seeding Aadhaar with electoral roll data subverts core principles of constitutional design. The ECI, vested with the powers of "superintendence, direction and control" over elections, is a constitutionally independent authority. In contrast, the UIDAI is a statutory body operating under executive control – bound by government directives under Section 50 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016, and subject to supersession under Section 48. Entrusting it with electoral data undermines the separation of powers, jeopardising the integrity of the electoral process and the democratic ideal of free and fair polls.

A further defect lies in the inherent unreliability of the Aadhaar database. The 2022 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Performance Audit Report No. 24 of 2021 identified major deficiencies, including the cancellation of over 4.75 lakh Aadhaar numbers due to their duplication and issuance based on faulty biometric data. The CAG also found no assurance that all Aadhaar holders qualify as 'residents' under the Aadhaar Act, as UIDAI had not prescribed any specific proof, document, or process to verify an applicant's period of residence in India. Relying on such an error-prone database for de-duplicating the electoral rolls would lead to wrongful deletions and exclusions.

Methods of electoral verification

Instead of pushing a technological fix and infringing on the right to privacy of citizens, the ECI must focus on strengthening traditional, time-tested methods of voter verification. Regular door-to-door verification by booth level officers; comprehensive, independent audits of electoral rolls; and functional public grievance redressal frameworks are more effective and constitutionally sound approaches to addressing concerns about alleged duplicate or fraudulent entries. Introducing independent oversight through social audits would further enhance accountability and prevent politically motivated manipulations of electoral rolls.

The right to vote is a constitutional guarantee. Any policy that imposes unreasonable burdens on citizen-voters, introduces unreliable verification mechanisms, or enables political profiling must be abandoned. The Aadhaar-voter ID linkage does all three. That such a constitutionally fraught scheme has found support across the political spectrum is troubling.

Exploring India's potential in the Arctic region

Manash K. Neog

Managing Director of Chase APAC, a public policy and research consulting firm

Swati Sudhakaran

Senior Manager at Chase

Global trade is swinging like a pendulum, with potential headwinds from the U.S. nudging each nation to start doubling down on alternate trade strategies. In such a scenario, partnerships around supply chains and trade routes are expanding based not only on the current fracturing of regional blocs, but also on climate change.

The frozen frontier of the Arctic serves as a canary in the coal mines for the impending climate catastrophe. It also serves as the source of great geopolitical leverage as sea levels continue to rise and new trade routes emerge. The Arctic reflects a critical energy source for the Global South in the years to come. While not recklessly exploiting the Arctic reserves, India should also get a say in the commercial opportunity for the unseen future.

The dying canary signals new trade routes

The September Arctic sea-ice is now shrinking at a rate of 12.2% per decade compared to its average extent during the period from 1981 to 2010 (NASA). This melting ice is also opening up access to a new trade route called the Northern Sea Route (NSR) in the Arctic, linking the Atlantic and the Pacific. This will exponentially transform global trade by shifting the flow of cargo and saving time and freight costs. The NSR is being hailed as the shortest route between Europe and Asia. India's long-term approach to exploring new mega ports and new routes – not just from an economic lens, but also from a strategic and geopolitical lens – makes the NSR crucial.

The number of Observers at the Arctic Council outnumbers the number of Arctic states. This indicates the growing recognition of the vulnerability of existing trade routes to geopolitical tensions.

India began its engagement with the Arctic early by signing the Svalbard Treaty in 1920 and is the only developing nation besides China that has an Arctic research base (Himadri). Last year, the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development and the National Council of Applied Economic Research partnered to model how changes in the Arctic, specifically the loss of sea ice, could influence India's monsoon patterns and agricultural outputs.

> While not recklessly exploiting the Arctic reserves, India should also get a say in the commercial opportunity for the unseen future

But to begin a timely action plan for the NSR, India's Arctic policy released in 2022 needs to be streamlined towards achieving its goals. India will need shipbuilding muscle to sail through the NSR's turbulent waters. The 2025-26 Budget set up a $3 billion Maritime Development Fund for the Shipping Ministry along with promoting shipbuilding clusters to increase the range, categories, and capacity of ships. Shipbuilding suited to Arctic requirements is key given that travel conditions would be quite harsh in the short-term. This means India needs to make adequate investments in ice-breaking fleets and other structural upgrades.

There is an urgent need for India to engage in multilateral dialogue on capacity building, training requisites, and knowledge sharing. Could 2025 to be the year of action?

This year, the Arctic Circle India Forum is taking place on May 3 and 4 in New Delhi. This should help contextualise the dialogue from an Asia- and India-focused lens. The forum should serve as an impetus to move the needle forward on India's well-thought-out Arctic policy with stakeholder consultations, the forging of partnerships, and perhaps the appointment of a 'polar ambassador' to present India's case internationally.

As international cargo shipment on the NSR increased exponentially from 41,000 tonnes in 2010 to almost 37.9 million tonnes in 2024, India also needs to be cognisant of studies surfacing, such as in the scientific journal *Nature Climate Change*, showing that global temperatures in 2024 breached the 1.5°C mark above pre-industrial levels. This suggests that even a single month or year at 1.5°C global warming may signify that Earth is entering a long-term breach of the vital Paris Agreement threshold. How close to the sun should we fly so that we do not lose our commercial vantage point but also do not call for an expedited disaster in one of the most fragile ecosystems on the planet? This presents a pressing policy issue for India and echoes the need for like-minded allies.

Playing with ice and fire

With its vast Arctic coastline, extensive experience in Arctic navigation, and training of personnel, Russia is an obvious partner for India to explore the NSR. The decision to establish a working group on the NSR under the bilateral intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation was made during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in July last year. Also, the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor emerges as a potential bridge to the NSR ports such as Pevek, Tiksi, and Sabetta.

However, if India inclines towards the Russian bloc, then it would be implying support to Chinese efforts, such as the Polar Silk Road which China is building as a northern extension of its Belt and Road Initiative. Not only would the NSR help China bypass the Malacca Strait chokepoint completely, but it would also give it much more control over the Arctic route.

If India supports the Western bloc and partners with the U.S., it could lose its perceived potential stake in the massive resources that currently fall under Russian control in the area. The ideal but obviously challenging solution would be to find a way to work with both the U.S. and Russia. Other partners should include Japan and South Korea. Both countries share India's concerns about the growing cooperation between China and Russia in the Arctic and about their businesses losing out on Arctic opportunities to Chinese competitors. The trio should advocate the rectification of disparities within the Arctic Council and promote a more inclusive and equitable Council.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tribute to the Pope

The passing away of Pope Francis has left a void in the world ("Pope Francis, a cheerful reformer, dies aged 88," April 22). He was the voice of peace in a world torn apart by war and conflict. His simple lifestyle and broad-mindedness can never be forgotten.

Monita
Nagercoil

Pope Francis was known as "the Pope of the slums" thanks to his deep commitment to the poor and the marginalised. He regularly visited impoverished communities, advocating for social justice and for the Church's role as a refuge for the overlooked and oppressed. He made changes within the Vatican to improve financial transparency and address the issue of clerical abuse. He reformed the Catholic Church's stance on the death penalty, nuclear weapons, abortion, and same-sex relationships. He made efforts to improve the relationship between Catholics and Muslims. His leadership has fostered a renewed sense of purpose within the Catholic Church and marks the end of an era.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

Overreach?

In the *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu* case, the Supreme Court said that the Bills that the Tamil Nadu Governor had not provided his assent to would now be law ("A reminder to the President and Governors", April 22). It is unclear how the judges could do this, usurping the duties and functions of the Governor. Instead, they could have allowed him a time limit to give his assent to the Bills.

S. Nagarajan Iyer
Coimbatore

Unwarranted remarks

It is unfortunate that the Vice-President, referring to the Tamil Nadu Governor's case, said that the Supreme Court thinks it is above Parliament (Judiciary can't attack forces of democracy, says Vice-President," April 18). He should have avoided such remarks and advised the Governor to take the judgment in the proper light and perform his role under the Constitution. Such remarks will only embolden the Tamil Nadu Governor and lead to a constitutional breakdown.

N.G.R. Prasad
Advocate, Madras High Court

To read more letters online, scan the QR code. Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name.

Section 69 of the BNS is redundant

R.K. Vij
Former IPS officer

Cases of rape registered on the premise of false promise of marriage have been in the eye of the storm for a long time. It is often alleged that despite the consent of some women to a physical relationship, the men in those relationships are accused of rape. It was expected that the Central government would do away with the provision of the law which undermines the agency of women in giving their free and informed consent before entering into a sexual relationship. Instead, it introduced a new provision in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Section 69 (presumably) solely addresses cases involving sexual intercourse based on false promise of marriage. This stand-alone offence did not exist in the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Limitations set by the Court

Section 69 has ostensibly reduced the gravity of cases of sexual intercourse registered on the false promise of marriage by reducing punishment, compared to the offence of rape defined under Section 63 BNS (or Section 375 of the IPC). Before discussing the redundancy of Section 69 BNS, it will be appropriate to see how the Supreme Court has narrowed the scope of such cases by imposing some restrictions.

First, differentiating between giving a false promise of marriage and committing breach of promise by the accused, the Court in a number of cases, including *Anurag Soni v. The State of Chhattisgarh* (2019), has held that unless the accused has no intention to fulfil the promise of marriage right from the beginning, it would not amount to rape. There could be cases when the accused might have made a promise with all seriousness to marry a woman, but subsequently encountered unforeseen circumstances.

In the second category of cases, when a woman knowingly maintains physical relations for a prolonged period, it cannot be said with certainty that this was purely because of the alleged promise made by the accused to marry her. In other words, the physical relationship must be traceable directly to the false promise made, and it must not be qualified by other circumstances or considerations (such as love or passion for the accused). In *Rajnish Singh @ Soni v. State of U.P.* (2025), the Court quashed the FIR and all the proceedings against the accused. The complainant had maintained a sexual relationship for about 15 years with the accused and alleged sexual abuse only on learning that the appellant had married another woman. She had also on many occasions portrayed herself to be the wife of the appellant. The Court held that the relationship was consensual and with no element of deceit or misconception.

Third, if on the date of developing a physical relationship, the prosecutrix was already a married woman, surrendering before the man on a false promise of marriage will not fall within the definition of consent obtained on misconception of fact. After quoting many precedents set by the Supreme Court, the High Court of Madhya Pradesh in *Abhishek Arjariya v. The State of Madhya Pradesh* (2025) quashed the FIR and further proceedings based on similar facts.

Examining Section 69

Section 69 states that "whosoever, by deceitful means or by making promise to marry to a woman without any intention of fulfilling the same, has sexual intercourse with her, such sexual intercourse not amounting to rape, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine." The explanation says "deceitful means" include "inducement for or false promise of employment or promotion or marrying by suppressing identity".

Section 69 of the BNS was introduced as a separate offence; there were no changes to the definition of rape and consent. A man is said to commit rape under Section 63 of the BNS under circumstances falling under seven descriptions, out of which six are concerned with consent. While under five descriptions, the consent is vitiated under given conditions, such as fear or death or intoxication, other cases of "without consent" fall under "misconception of fact" as provided in Section 28 of the BNS. Consent defined under Section 28 of the BNS is vitiated if given by a person under fear of injury, or under a misconception of fact, unsoundness of mind, or intoxication, or under 12 years of age. It therefore implies that false promise of marriage is covered under the generic term "misconception of fact" given in Section 28 of the BNS.

Since the definition of rape and consent given in the BNS are *pari materia* to their definitions given in the IPC, the offence of sexual intercourse committed consequent to the false promise of marriage, i.e., misconception of fact, will still fall under the scope of the offence of rape. Once an offence is justified to be covered under the scope of rape, it cannot hold ground as another offence of lesser gravity as defined under Section 69 of the BNS. Thus Section 69 appears to be redundant. Further, unless an "exception" is carved out in Section 63 to exclude cases falling under Section 69, Section 69 cannot be held constitutionality valid. Also, Section 69 does not have a non-obstante clause. It is therefore, likely to be hit by Article 14 of the Constitution.

When Courts are quashing FIRs based on the precedents described above, it would be better for the police not to charge-sheet such cases. A preliminary inquiry should be conducted to establish whether a cognisable offence was committed or not. Such action will prevent unnecessary hardship to the accused person and also save time for our constitutional courts.

> Without any change in the definition of rape and consent, the stand-alone Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita seems unsustainable

A case of selective outrage

The responses to the 'sacred thread' and hijab controversies have been different

STATE OF PLAY

K.V. Aditya Bhardwaj
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Recently in Karnataka, there were two instances of students from the Brahmin community facing hurdles at exam centres for wearing the *janivara* ('sacred thread'). In both instances, the students had come to the centres to write the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (CET) 2025, which determines eligibility for admission to professional courses such as engineering and architecture. In one instance, two students in Shivamogga were initially stopped from entering the hall wearing their 'sacred threads', but were later permitted to write the exam after authorities intervened. However, in another instance, in Bidar, a student ended up missing the exam because the authorities did not allow him to enter wearing the 'sacred thread'. Soon after these incidents, the authorities clarified that the 'sacred thread' was absent in the list of items that are not allowed inside the CET exam hall. They said that these were instances of "miscommunication" – by two Home Guards in Shivamogga and by a principal and a clerical staff in Bidar.

As the outrage over the two incidents escalated, the government responded swiftly. Those accused of creating barriers for the students were suspended in Shivamogga and dismissed in Bidar. The Bidar district in-charge and the Forest Minister, Eshwar Khandre, visited the student who missed his exam in Bidar. The Minister even offered a free engineering seat to the student, in his family-run college in Bhalki. Meanwhile, the Shivamogga Deputy Commissioner clarified that no one had "cut" the 'sacred thread' at the centre, contrary to claims circulating on several social media sites and TV channels. The government seemed to be on the defensive particularly because the controversy erupted days after the findings of the 'caste census' was tabled in the State Cabinet. The report has rattled the "upper castes" since it states that their population is "lower" than what they claim.

A section of the media and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party blamed the Congress government led by Siddaramaiah, known for championing the cause of AHINDA (minorities, Backward Classes, and Dalits). Brahmin groups held protests across the State. They were joined by BJP leaders in some places, who argued that wearing the 'sacred thread' was part of the religious rights of the community and had been violated.

The similarities between these incidents and a controversy in 2022, when colleges in coastal Karnataka shut their gates to girls wearing the hijab, did not seem to strike many people. It is true that the context of the hijab ban was different. The banning of the hijab was part of a move to prescribe a uniform at the Women's Government PU College in Udupi in December 2021. It was led by a BJP MLA to ensure "equality in classrooms". But soon, the ban spread to several colleges in coastal Karnataka. Many Muslim girl students quit college and did not write exams that year since they were asked to remove the hijab inside the institutions. In the present cases, 'sacred threads' were apparently not being allowed inside exam centres as part of attempts to curb exam malpractices. But these proved to be instances of overzealous invigilation. What is common between the two controversies, however, is the idea of religious rights.

Aliya Assadi, one of the five students of the Women's Government PU College in Udupi who protested against the college's ban on the hijab in classrooms, and who was a petitioner before the High Court and later the Supreme Court, sought to point out the different responses to the controversies. On April 20, she wrote on X: "Wearing a hijab is as important to us as wearing a *janivara* [is] to a Brahmin. Isn't the pain of a Brahmin [who is] prevented from writing an exam for wearing a *janivara* and the pain of a Muslim girl [who is] prevented from writing an exam for wearing a hijab the same? Then why this difference? Officers who stopped students for wearing a *janivara* [were] immediately sacked. No action was taken against those who closed the gates of education for hijab-clad girl students... This is our system."

The hijab issue is pending in court. Hearing a petition filed by the students who were not allowed inside classrooms wearing hijabs, the Karnataka High Court upheld the institution's right to prescribe a uniform. A challenge in the Supreme Court led to a split verdict in October 2022. The case was transferred to a larger Bench, where it is yet to come up for hearing.

Food prices may remain low if IMD's prediction holds true

More than just good rainfall, a better spatial distribution of monsoon rain is important for crop production

DATA POINT

Samreen Wani

This year, India might receive an 'above normal' monsoon for the second year in a row, according to the first monsoon forecast for 2025 by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The country is likely to receive about 105% of the long period average (LPA) rainfall this year with an error margin of ± 5%.

The LPA for southwest monsoon rainfall in the 1971-2020 period was 87 cm. If the rainfall received is less than 90% of the LPA, it is 'deficient'. If it is between 90% and 95% of LPA, it is 'below normal'. And if it is within the 96-104% range, it is 'normal'. An LPA range between 105% and 110%, as is the forecast for 2025, is 'above normal'. Rainfall is in 'excess' if it is above 110% of the LPA.

This is just the first forecast; an update will be issued in June. Past data shows that the IMD's first monsoon forecasts have mostly been off the mark. The difference between the first forecast and the actual rainfall received has been within the ± 5% range only eight times in more than two decades. However, adopting a new strategy for monsoon forecasting in 2021 seems to have improved the accuracy of IMD forecasts (**Chart 1**).

Dr. Madhavan Nair Rajeevan, Vice Chancellor, Atria University, and former Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, believes that the IMD's forecasts have improved substantially and that errors have significantly reduced. "Seasonal forecasting is a challenging task due to its inherent limits in predictability. It is the most challenging problem in climate forecasting," he says.

He explains that since 2007, the IMD has been using an advanced statistical model with much more accuracy. And since 2021, it has been using a "multi model ensemble dynamical system" for generating seasonal forecasts, in addition to statistical models which couple the climate forecasting models of various global climate agencies along with the IMD's own models.

If the actual rainfall received adheres to the forecast, this year will be the second year in a row when India will receive an 'above normal' rainfall. While monsoon rainfall in 2024 was 108% of the LPA, it was 'below normal' in 2023.

These are just the average figures for the country as a whole, and there are usually significant geographical variations. For instance, in 2023, though the country received 'below normal' rainfall, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry received 'excess' rainfall. In the same year, east Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar received rainfall much below India's average (**Chart 2**). Rajeevan says that while the IMD is trying to predict such spatial variability, there is still a lot of scope for improvement.

The Indian monsoon is highly susceptible to the vagaries of climate change and global warming – particularly the El Nino and La Nina effect. The El Nino is a sporadic weather event that causes warm surface water temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. La Nina causes cold ocean temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. These have been linked to changing rainfall patterns and crop failure in India.

However, the IMD forecast for this year predicts neutral El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions during the monsoon. This in effect means that neither El Nino nor La Nina is expected to interfere with the monsoon this year. These weather events are also a function of their interaction with the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), a climate pattern in the Indian Ocean. A positive IOD may help rainfall despite the El Nino, and worsen its impact if it is negative.

A good monsoon also implies good farm output, easing any concerns of a rise in food prices. Rising food and vegetable inflation have been worrisome trends in the last two years and have been driven in a large part by erratic rainfall. Inflation data since January 2025, however, shows an easing of food prices mainly because of a good harvest last year, says Nambi Appadurai, Director, Climate Resilience Practice, WRI India.

Food inflation started easing in January 2025 when it dropped below 6% from over 8% in December 2024. This slide continued in the following months and food inflation dipped below headline inflation in March 2025 for the first time since July 2023 (**Chart 3**).

Appadurai points out that "a variety of external factors" and not just a good monsoon impact food prices. The Economic Survey last year noted that apart from unpredictable rainfall patterns, weather conditions such as heatwaves, other logistical issues, trade controls, and plant diseases also had a major effect on food prices in the past two years. An HSBC research report asserts that rising temperatures have overtaken rainfall as the main reason in pushing up food prices.

"Last year the monsoon was 'above normal' because of which the agricultural output grew by 3.6% and foodgrain production by 5.7%," he adds. India is expected to produce about 166 million tonnes of foodgrains in 2024-25 according to the second advanced estimates. Meanwhile, production estimates for cereals (159 million tonnes) and rice (121 million tonnes) for 2024-25 indicate the highest rate of production growth in about a decade.

While the 'above normal' monsoon prediction for India this year is good news, a better spatial distribution of rainfall is more important for crop production. For instance, while 'excess' rainfall in the regions of Maharashtra in 2024 led to destruction of onion crop, 'deficient' rainfall in some areas of the Gangetic plains and Punjab led to a delay in paddy sowing, driving up the cost of food.

A rain check

Data for the charts were sourced from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Chart 1: The difference in first rainfall forecast by the IMD and the actual rainfall received in the respective years (in % points)

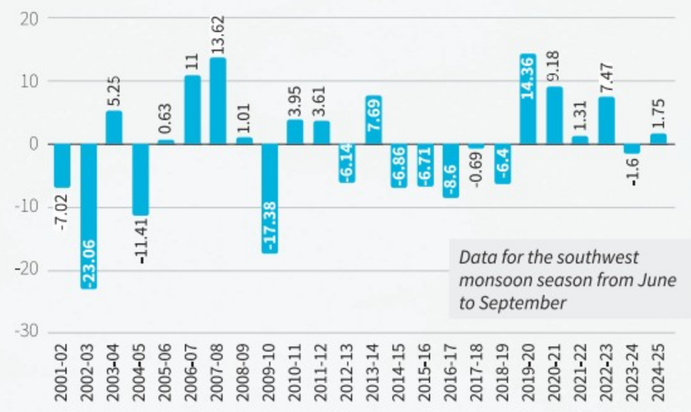


Chart 2: The spatial distrubution of rainfall across regions during the southwest monsoon season (as a % deviation from normal). Data for 2023-24

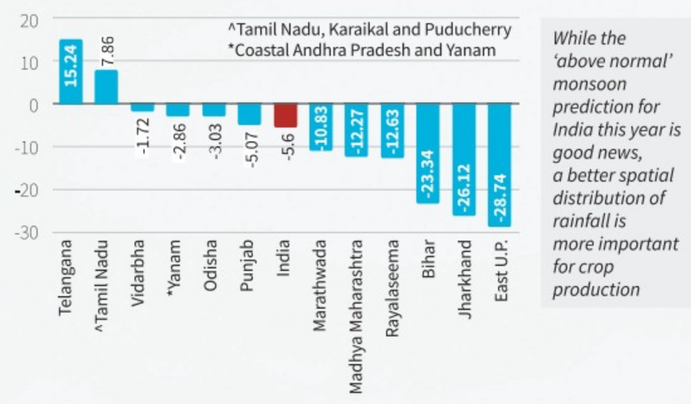
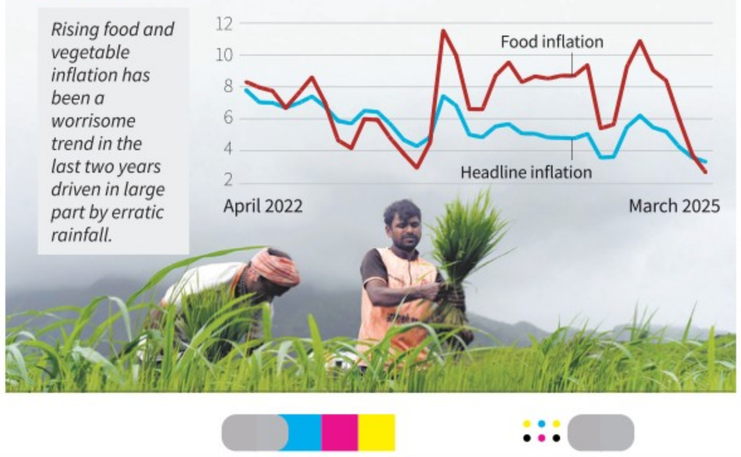


Chart 3: The chart shows headline and food inflation (Y-o-Y change, in %)



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 23, 1975

U.S. consulting govts. to end Saigon war by negotiations

Washington, April 22: The United States President, Mr. Gerald Ford, denied last night that the U.S. had exerted "any kind of direct pressure" on the South Vietnamese President, Mr. Nguyen Van Thieu, to resign. In a televised conversation with three network correspondents, some hours after Mr. Thieu stepped down in Saigon, Mr. Ford maintained that the decision to quit was Mr. Thieu's own.

Mr. Ford nevertheless left the impression that the U.S.'s changed attitude towards Mr. Thieu in the last few days might have been communicated to him, probably by the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. This reinforced other reports which said that within the last week or so Mr. Thieu had been told that the U.S.'s position vis-a-vis him had shifted from one of support to neutrality.

In the face of the rapidly changing political and military situation in Saigon, the U.S.'s concern now is certainly not about the future of Mr. Thieu but about what his successors can do to prevent a bloody battle for Saigon. Mr. Ford himself was not sure whether the communists would now want a complete military victory, or a negotiated settlement (which many here now take to be an euphemism for surrender) between the insurgents and whoever eventually succeeds Mr. Thieu – few here believe that the aged and nearly blind Vice-President Tran Van Huong can long control the situation in Saigon. With the situation being as desperate as it is, Mr. Ford did not even once talk about "stabilising" the situation in Saigon with or without U.S. arms aid.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 23, 1925

Ceylon Pearl fisheries

Ootacamund, April 22: It is understood that the Ceylon Pearl Fisheries this year were a failure on the whole by reason of the fact that the great majority of oysters dived and brought out were immature, but from the Ceylon Government's point of view they were not a financial failure, on account of keen competition between the Indian merchants to try their luck as much as possible, as they were investing large sums in the purchase of oysters. Sanitary arrangements at the camp were very excellent and the authorities generally were extremely helpful to all the Indians, whether they were merchants, divers or scavengers.

From Page One

26 killed in J&K terrorist attack

This is the first major terror attack on civilians in Kashmir since the Centre ended J&K's special status in 2019. Nearly 40 tourists were present at the meadow when the terrorists opened indiscriminate fire, using both automatic rifles and small arms. They reportedly checked the identity of victims before shooting them at close range. "Gunshots rattled the meadow and there were many in the open meadow who immediately fell to the ground," an eyewitness said. The aftermath of the terror attack was captured by local guides on mobile cameras. Several tourists were seen pleading for help, and one woman tourist managed to call the J&K police after the attack.

The terrorists, whose numbers could not be ascertained immediately, took advantage of the non-motorable destination – popular among honeymooners, trekkers and adventure junkies – to target tourists and ensure that any help from authorities would take time to reach them, officials said. Pahalgam remains a high-security zone as it houses the Amarnath shrine and has multi-layer security cover round the year.

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Lt. Gen. M.V. Suchendra Kumar rushed to Srinagar and was "briefed by local formation commanders on the present security situation in Kashmir Valley". J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also used strong words to condemn the attack. "This attack is much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years. I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough," Mr. Abdullah said.

(With inputs from Vijaita Singh and Nistula Hebbar)

Bangladesh rejects India's allegation over Hindu leader's death

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Bangladesh has rejected New Delhi's charge that the recent killing of a Hindu leader was part of a "pattern of systematic persecution" of minorities in that country.

The body of Hindu community leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, a resident of Dinajpur district in north Bangladesh, was recovered on Thursday night. His son has claimed Roy was allegedly abducted from his home in the village, about 330 kilometres northwest of Dhaka, and beaten to death.

"It is unfortunate that the death of Bhabesh Chandra Roy has been described as part of a 'pattern of systematic persecution' of Hindu minorities under the interim government," interim government chief Muhammad Yunus's press secretary Shafiqul Alam told the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) news agency late Monday.

Vance calls for closer ties between U.S., India in defence, energy sectors

The U.S. Vice-President says the two countries have finalised terms of reference for a bilateral trade agreement; this will be in consonance with the desire to protect workers while also promoting exports without suppressing wages, he adds

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Diplomatic engagement: U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance addresses a gathering in Jaipur on Tuesday. PTI

Pitching for closer ties in the defence and energy sectors, United States Vice-President J.D. Vance on Tuesday said the strength of his country's relations with India would determine the world's future in the 21st century. The trade agreement between the two countries would be built on fairness and shared priorities, Mr. Vance said.

Addressing an event at the Rajasthan International Centre here, Mr. Vance said the U.S. was looking for a greater access to the Indian markets, as this would lead to collaborations in diverse areas. He said it would create a "win-win partnership" when U.S. President Donald Trump was seeking to rebalance global trade to build a better future.

The U.S. Vice-President said the governments of the two countries had identified priority areas for creating new jobs, building durable supply chains and achieving prosperity for workers while negotiating for a bilateral trade agreement. "We have officially finalised the terms of reference for the trade negotiation," he said.

Mr. Vance, who met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday, said the terms of reference would set a road map towards a final deal. This would also be in consonance with the desire of the two countries to protect their workers while promoting exports without suppressing their wages, he said.

A large number of trade and industry representatives, politicians, government officials, academicians and students attended the event. Mr. Vance said the interests of the two nations in ensuring a free, open, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region were in full alignment, while noting that India would soon host the Quad Leaders' Summit.

Welcoming the Modi government's announcement to amend the civil nuclear liability laws, Mr. Vance said the U.S. was willing to support India's energy security ambitions, "American energy can help realise India's nuclear power production goals, which would support its artificial energy ambitions... There is no AI future without energy security and energy dominance."

The U.S. Vice-President, who is on a four-day visit to India, said, "We don't blame PM Modi for fighting for India's industry, but we do blame past American leaders for failing to do the same for our workers." .

While Trump's administration has announced 90-day pause on the steep tariff rates on Indian exports, Mr. Vance said Washington had earlier approached Mr. Modi with an attitude of "preachiness, or even one of condescension".

He said the prior administrations saw India as a source of low-cost labour, even as they criticised the Modi government.

Delhi HC orders Patanjali to take down 'communal' video on rival firm's product

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

After the Delhi High Court on Tuesday slammed Baba Ramdev over his remarks allegedly targeting Hamdard's popular drink Rooh Afza as "Sharbat Jihad", the Yoga Guru agreed to immediately take down all related videos.

Mr. Ramdev, in a video introducing his firm's new drink communally targeted Rooh Afza, a popular sharbat brand.

"Shocks the conscience of the court. This is indefensible," Justice Amit Bansal remarked on Hamdard's plea against Ramdev.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who represented Hamdard, argued that this was a "shocking case" which goes beyond disparagement of Rooh Afza. He said Mr Ramdev's remark is akin to hate speech.

Baba Ramdev

After a short break, the court resumed hearing during which senior advocate Rajiv Nayar, representing Mr. Ramdev, said his client will immediately take down the video.

"I could not believe my eyes and ears when I saw this [videos]," the court said ordering Mr. Ramdev to submit an affidavit undertaking that he shall not issue any statements or advertisements or social media posts in the future.

"At the outset, counsel appearing on behalf of the defendant [Ramdev] on instructions submits that all impugned ads in print or video will be taken down or suitably altered. Let an affidavit be placed on record stating he shall not issue any such statements or advertisements or social media posts similar to this in future," the court said.

Hamdard had moved Delhi High Court against Mr. Ramdev's comments after his video went viral. Ramdev defended his remarks, saying he did not name any brand or community.

Mr. Rohatgi told the court that Mr. Ramdev had previously faced strictures from the Supreme Court for targeting allopathy.

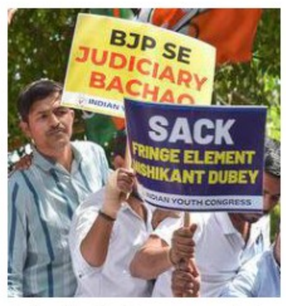
SC to hear next week plea against BJP MP's remarks on court, CJI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a plea seeking judicial intervention on "derogatory" remarks made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against the court and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna,.

Making an oral mention before a Bench headed by Justice B. R. Gavai, a lawyer said the court must step in to at least remove videos on the comments, widely being circulated on social media. He said the government was hardly taking any action. Several advocates who wrote to Attorney-General R. Venkataramani for consent to initiate contempt of court proceedings against Mr. Dubey had been met with silence.

Mr. Dubey had launched a broadside against the Supreme Court on Saturday, saying Parliament and State Assemblies should be shut if the apex court has to make laws. He had also taken a swipe at Chief Justice Khanna, holding him responsible for "civil wars" in the country. The comments came after the Supreme Court issued three-month timelines to the President and Governors to decide on Bills sent to them for assent.



Indian Youth Congress protests against Nishikant Dubey over his remarks in New Delhi.

Will expose the plot behind Murshidabad riots, says Mamata

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that she would expose the plot behind the violence in Murshidabad and urged the people of the district to have faith in her. Ms. Banerjee added that she will be visiting the violence-affected areas in the first week of May.

"I will visit the area in the first week of May. I will assess everything and sort out the rest of the matters then. You can have that much faith in me. You can be certain," the Chief Minister said, while speaking at a government event at Paschim Medinipur.

Ms. Banerjee said some outsiders, along with locals, were involved in the riots. "There had been a riot, it is sad. None of us want this. Two wards have been affected [in Dhulian Municipality]. Some outsiders offered help and some locals did this. We will reveal the plot behind this and how they did this," the Chief Minister said.

West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose, leaders of Opposition parties, and teams of the National Commission of Women and National Human Rights Commission have visited the violence affected areas.

Clashes that erupted in Dhulian municipality and the adjoining areas of Samserganj on April 11 and April 12 over the Waqf (Amendment) Act had claimed three lives and forced hundreds to flee their homes and take shelter in adjoining Malda district. The Chief Minister said that the government has assured support to those who lost their family members.

SC schedules Pegasus hearing for next week

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week petitions alleging the Indian establishment used Israeli military grade spyware Pegasus to snoop on personalities across a spectrum of politicians, activists, and journalists.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, senior advocate Shyam Divan said the court has to hear in detail the report of the committee established to look into the allegations and that of former Supreme Court judge, Justice R.V. Raveendran, who was tasked to consider improvement in cyber security.

Petitioners included senior journalists N. Ram and Shashi Kumar who had sought a fair probe.

U.K. rejected extradition of Bhandari, ED tells court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday informed a Delhi court about a U.K. court denying the extradition of Sanjay Bhandari to India. Mr. Bhandari, a defence consultant, who is wanted on charges of tax evasion and money laundering, has cited the "unsafe conditions" in the Tihar Jail in Delhi.

Mr. Bhandari's name has also cropped up in the ED's ongoing probe in a money laundering case against Robert Vadra, brother-in-law of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

The submissions were made before Special Judge Neelofer Abida Perveen during the hearing of a money laundering case against Mr. Bhandari and others. The Central agency also submitted that its application to declare Mr. Bhandari a "fugitive" is currently pending.

NEERI told to study impact of industrial units on Taj Mahal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday tasked the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) with studying the impact of glass industries on the Taj Mahal, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

A Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said in case of an adverse report from NEERI, then the court would not hesitate to pass a direction for the removal of the industrial units. The court asked NEERI to file an affidavit clarifying the time required to complete the assessment exercise. It ordered the government and its agencies to extend the expert body their cooperation and assistance.

"We want to know the extent of pollution caused by these industries. If we find that these industries are causing pollution, we won't hesitate to order shifting them. Some examination has to be made about the extent of pollution," the Bench said.

The court has asked Uttar Pradesh to form a team to visit industrial units near the Taj.

The court also directed the U.P. Pollution Control Board to constitute a team to visit industrial units highlighted in an affidavit filed recently by the State and submit an interim report on the aspect of pollutants produced by them.

The court had previously deplored the Taj Trapezium Zone authority on environment protection in and around the Taj Mahal asking it whether the preservation of the monument was a "*tamasha*".

History in frames: marking moments in print with *The Hindu's* front pages

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In an age of digital memories and fleeting social media feeds, some stories are worth being remembered the old-fashioned way – through print. A growing number of readers are now turning to *The Hindu*'s archives to mark their most personal milestones, one front page at a time.

"Relive the news, relive the day", an initiative launched by *The Hindu*, allows readers to request a framed reprint of the newspaper's front page from any date, going back as far as 1880. "It's history you can hold," says a spokesperson from *The Hindu*.

"Each front page captures not just the news of the day, but the tone, the design, even the priorities of the time."

While *The Hindu*'s archives have long been a research treasure trove for scholars and journalists, the recent personal turn has found resonance with families, history enthusiasts, educators, and even corporate clients looking for distinctive retirement gifts.

The Hindu's front page dated April 3, 2011.

Each front page is a faithful reproduction from *The Hindu's* vast and meticulously maintained archives.

Printed on premium paper and set in an elegantly minimalist frame, this is more than decor – it's a conversation starter, a tribute, and a timeless gift.

As demand grows, *The Hindu* has made it easy for readers to order their framed front pages online. A simple search by the date reveals the front-page preview and allows for quick ordering with nationwide delivery. This is how you can order: Visit thehindu.com/frontpage or scan the code below. Enter the date of your choice using the calendar given. Preview your front page. Enter your address details and place your order. If no edition was published on your selected date – such as on certain public holidays or during weekly non-publication days – you will be prompted to choose an alternative.

HC posts M.J. Akbar's petition against Priya Ramani for Sept. 19

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday posted for September 19 the hearing on an appeal filed by former Union Minister M.J. Akbar challenging the acquittal of journalist Priya Ramani in a criminal defamation case over her accusations of sexual harassment against him.

The court deferred the hearing after Ms. Ramani's counsel sought an adjournment due to the unavailability of the senior lawyer arguing the case. Mr. Akbar's counsel, on the other hand, sought an early date for the case's hearing but the court refused it, saying that it was only a criminal defamation matter.

Mr. Akbar challenged a trial court's February 17, 2021 order acquitting Ms. Ramani on grounds that a woman had the right to put grievances before any platform of her choice even after decades.

APPEAL

Daisy is 44 years suffering from Heart Aliment. She underwent valve replacement seven years ago, and now has to undergo Open Heart Surgery at The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai. Her husband had deserted her when he came to know about her condition that she cannot bear children. Daisy is helpless living with her widowed mother. She cannot bear the cost of the surgery which is Rs.3,68,350/-. She needs help and support from well wishers, so that she gets a new lease of life. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/M.O/NEFT Transfer & Google Pay (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C.No:60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph:044-42137401/28235324/7338978027/31523781.**

E-Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.

Website: WWW.womenswelfaresyndiate.org.

WWS

Blood flows on lush meadow as gunshots break afternoon calm

Amit Shah likely to visit Pahalgam today; terrorists first asked for names before shooting down the victims, says a survivor; tourists ran for cover, but there was no place to hide; victims hail from States such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana, U.P.

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

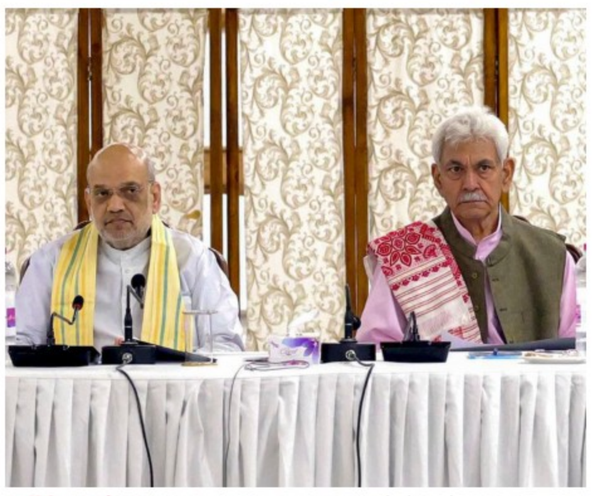
Union Home Minister Amit Shah rushed to Srinagar on Tuesday following the targeted terror attack against tourists in South Kashmir's Pahalgam.

At least 26 persons were killed in the attack, which included foreigners and an Intelligence Bureau official, a government source told *The Hindu*.

The IB official Manish Ranjan, posted as ministerial staff in Hyderabad, was on a holiday when he was reportedly shot dead in front of his wife and children, the source said.

Mr. Shah is likely to visit Pahalgam, the scene of terror on Wednesday. He was accompanied by Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha. A government official said that search operations have been launched in the areas surrounding the meadow where the attack took place. The Army said in a statement that a joint search operation has been launched in the general area of Baisran, Pahalgam,

The attack comes days after Mr. Shah reviewed the security situation in J&K on April 7-8 following the March 27 incident in Jammu's Kathua when a group of freshly infiltrated unidentified terrorists killed four policemen. Two terrorists were killed in the encounter while at least three are still absconding as search operation continues.



Call for action: Union Home Minister Amit Shah with J&K L-G Manoj Sinha at a high level security meeting in Srinagar. PTI

Chilling picture

Eyewitnesses painted a chilling picture of gunfire breaking the calm of a regular Tuesday afternoon with scores of people enjoying their day out.

As gunshots rang out, there was panic and tourists ran for cover but there was no place to hide in the wide, open space, said a woman tourist. Another woman said terrorists first asked for names before shooting down the victims.

Pune businessman Santosh Jagdale was asked to come out of his tent and recite an Islamic verse. "When he couldn't, he was shot thrice," said his daughter Asavari Jagdale.

After her father fell to the ground, the gunmen turned on her uncle who was lying next to her and shot him several times in the back. They shot several other men. There was nobody to help. No police or Army, which reached 20 minutes later. Even the locals there were reciting the Islamic verse, she said.

Asavari, 26, does not know if her father and uncle are alive or dead. She, her mother and a woman relative were spared, and locals and security forces evacuated them to the Pahalgam Club where they remain clueless about the fate of the two men.

The tourists gathered at Baisaran were from several States.

Among the dead were people from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. At least one person from Gujarat, three from Tamil Nadu and two from Maharashtra were among the injured, according to initial reports.

(With inputs from PTI)

Trump, Putin, Meloni express their solidarity

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON/MOSCOW

U.S. President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni were among the world leaders who condemned the terror attack and expressed solidarity with India.

"Deeply disturbing news out of Kashmir. The United States stands strong with India against Terrorism," Mr. Trump said in a post on Truth Social. Mr. Putin extended condolences over the terrorist attack and said the "brutal crime" has no justification whatsoever and its perpetrators will face a deserved punishment.

President condemns attack; parties across spectrum ask govt. to take concrete steps

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday termed the terrorist attack in Kashmir as shocking and painful, and said that the dastardly inhuman act of targeting innocent citizens was unpardonable. She also offered heartfelt condolences to the families who had lost their dear ones.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar too condemned the killing of tourists. In a post on X, Mr. Dhankhar said, "Deeply anguished by the horrific terrorist attack. Such acts of violence are reprehensible."

Political parties from across the spectrum strongly condemned the attack, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge calling it a "blot on humanity" and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi asking the Union government to take "accountability instead of making hollow claims of normalcy".

Condemning the attacks in a X post, Mr. Kharge said, "The entire nation is united in fighting the scourge of cross-border terrorism. These dastardly targeted attacks are a blot on humanity."

Mallikarjun Kharge

Mr. Gandhi wrote on X, "The cowardly terrorist attack in Pahalgam is extremely condemnable and heartbreaking. The whole country is united against terrorism. Instead of making hollow claims on the situation being normal in Jammu and Kashmir, the government should now take accountability and take concrete steps so that such barbaric incidents do not happen in the future and innocent Indians do not lose their lives like this."

Expressing her pain and anguish in a statement, Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi said, "The entire country stands united against terror. We share a deep resolve to defeat these divisive and violent forces". "We need to work to build the broad social consensus against terror that existed in the past," she added.

Targeting innocent and unarmed civilians is a crime against humanity, said senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra while her party colleague Jairam Ramesh asserted that "it is the time to exhibit a cohesive collective will and the Union government must take into confidence all political parties by calling an all-party meeting".

CPI general secretary D. Raja condemned the attacks and urged the Modi government to take "appropriate steps to respond to the challenge".

Former J&K Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti said, "Historically, Kashmir has welcomed tourists warmly, making this rare incident deeply concerning. A thorough investigation is needed to bring the perpetrators to justice and examine potential security lapses. Ensuring visitor safety is paramount, and steps must be taken to prevent future attacks."

(With PTI inputs)

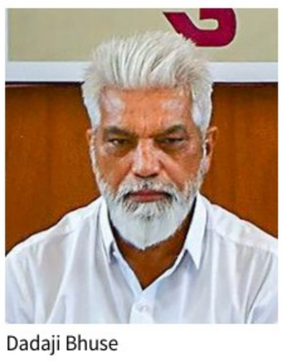
Maharashtra govt. relents, Hindi no longer compulsory

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

After triggering a controversy by making Hindi compulsory as the third language in schools from Class 1, the Maharashtra government on Tuesday announced that study of the language would no longer be mandatory till the fifth standard.

School Education Minister Dadaji Bhuse said the Centre was not imposing Hindi on the States, but only implementing provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

Mr. Bhuse said a Government Resolution (GR) was issued with the word "mandatory" removed.



Dadaji Bhuse

'Will frame new rules'

"We will frame new rules after studying the school, the number of students, and teachers teaching there. However, the three-language formula will be implemented, and schools must accommodate other language choices," he said.

Citing the provision on language in the NEP, Mr. Bhuse said, "The three-language formula will continue to be implemented, while keeping in mind constitutional provisions, aspirations of people, region, union and the need to promote multilingualism and unity. The three languages will be the choice of students themselves, as long as two of the three languages are native to India."

"In short, the Centre has not mandated any language. The three-language formula will still apply but there will be no need to study Hindi," Mr. Bhuse told presspersons.

He said Hindi was placed as a third language on the lines of English, which is used across the world for communication.

A week ago, the Maharashtra School Education Department announced that Hindi would be compulsory as the third language in Marathi and English-medium schools for Classes 1 to 5.

Currently, only two languages, Marathi and English, are mandatory for Grades 1 to 4 in Marathi- and English-medium schools.

Parliament is supreme, Constitution does not visualise any authority above it: Dhankhar

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Digging in his heels in the face of criticism, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday reasserted that the Constitution did not visualise any authority above Parliament.

The Chairman of the Upper House also sought to counter those criticising him for his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order by saying that every word spoken by a constitutional authority was guided by supreme national interest.

Mr. Dhankhar was addressing a Delhi University event.

SC judgment

Mr. Dhankhar had alleged judicial incursion into the Executive in response to the Supreme Court's April 8 directions to the President to act within three months on Bills passed by the Assemblies and referred by the Governor. The court had also ruled that a Governor cannot withhold assent indefinitely.

Jagdeep Dhankhar

Referring to the judgment, Mr. Dhankhar had last week said that India "cannot have a situation where the Judiciary directs the President". He had also criticised the courts for acting as a "super Parliament".

"I find it conceivably intriguing that some have recently reflected that constitutional offices can be ceremonial, ornamental. Nothing can be far distanced from a wrong understanding of the role of everyone in this country – constitutional functionary or a citizen," said the Vice-President.

"There is no visualisation above Parliament. Parliament is supreme and that being the situation, let me tell you, it is as supreme as every individual in the country. Part of 'we the people' is an atom in democracy and that atom has atomic power. That atomic power is reflected during elections and that is why we are a democratic nation," he said.

Opposition slams Vice-President's view

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Opposition members on Tuesday reacted sharply to Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's remark.

In an post on X, Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal said, "The law: Neither Parliament nor the Executive is supreme, the Constitution is supreme. The provisions of the Constitution are interpreted by the Supreme Court. That's how this country has understood the law so far!"

RJD leader and Rajya Sabha member Manoj K. Jha said, "I would urge Vice-President to revisit the Constituent Assembly debates where the importance of balance between the Judiciary and the Legislature was discussed."

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said there was a strict division of powers in the Constitution between the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

"The judiciary in this country is meant to do judicial review. Yes, Parliament makes the law but the Supreme Court of India is the supreme authority to review those laws. Should the Judiciary be shut down? Is judicial review wrong? So what is the Vice-President talking about?" she said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) signals Thackeray family reunion

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Tuesday expressed optimism about a potential reconciliation between party chief Uddhav Thackeray and his estranged cousin, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Raut stated, "There is no need for outsiders to mediate between Uddhav and Raj. I understand their emotions and family ties. Relationships aren't broken by politics alone. Uddhav is very positive about rapprochement–his stance is for the betterment of the State."

The Rajya Sabha member stated that the Thackeray cousins could set aside past differences for the larger cause of Maharashtra's interests.

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2516/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001332)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Construction of LILO on 220 kV Chinchwad - Telco line at 400 kV Chakan s/s (OH Line part, by using HTLS conductor and ACSR conductor) and Replacement of 0.4 ACSR conductor by HPC of existing 220kV Chinchwad-Telco line under Pune zone, MSETCL Maharashtra."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. https://srmetender.mahatransco.in

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 15.04.2025.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL.

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2515/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001331)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 132/33 kV Deori substation Dist. Gondia along with associated EHV Tr. line onturnkey basis under Nagpur Zone."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. https://srmetender.mahatransco.in

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 15.04.2025.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : Re Tender - E -tender No.05/2024-25/SE/PPD/KCN, Rebuild RKI- Providing underground sewage networks and allied works in Division 54 of Kochi Corporation for the newly proposed 5 MLD STP at Elamkulam.
EMD : Rs. 500000, **Tender fee** : Rs. 16540. **Last Date for submitting Tender** : 26-05-2025 03:00:pm, **Phone** : 8547638502
Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
PPD Regional Office, KOCHI
KWA-JB-GL-6-18-2025-26

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2518/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001309)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Construction of 132 kV DCDC LILO Line on 132 kV Huoban-Sakri Line for 132 kV Pimpalner Substation (R.L. 29.394 km) under Nashik zone, MSETCL Maharashtra on turnkey basis"

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. https://srmetender.mahatransco.in

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 16.04.2025.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL.

KSEB KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED - E - Tender Notice

O/o the Chief Engineer (P&SCM) Vydyuthi Bhavanam, Thiruvananthapuram

E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_758348_1 **PAC:** Rs. 38,83,72,676/- **Last Date:** 23.04.2025 05.00 pm
Materials to be supplied: Supply of Accessories for LT ABC of various sizes
E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_756695_1 **PAC:** Rs. 45,64,40,520/- **Last Date:** 26.04.2025 05.00 pm
Materials to be supplied: Supply of 11 kV 99sq.mm AAAC Covered Conductor- 2803 km.
E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_757864_1 **PAC:** Rs. 144.60 Crore **Last Date:** 26.04.2025 05.00 pm
Materials to be supplied: Supply of 8m/200kg PSC Poles to Various Electrical Circles of KSEBL

O/o the Deputy Chief Engineer, Electrical Circle, Kasargod

E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_755483_1 **PAC:**Rs. 7,53,58,467/- **Last Date:** 25.04.2025 04.00 pm
Scope of Work: Planning, design, engineering, assembly manufacturing, testing, supply, loading, transportation, unloading, insurance delivery at site, handling, storage, installation testing, commissioning, and documentation of all items/material required to complete the ACSR Raccoon works in Kasaragod district.
E Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_744856_2 **PAC:**Rs. 11,80,70,199/- **Last Date:** 26.04.2025 05.00 pm
Name of Work: Reconductoring of 66 Km 11 kV OH line to Covered Conductor and Installation of 20 Km 11 KV Covered Conductor – Kasaragod Special Package for 2024-25.
Visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in and **www.kseb.in** Ref : **PR/MC1/E555/E-tender/2025-26**

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KSEB KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED - E - Tender Notice

O/o the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division, Kazhakuttom, Thiruvananthapuram

E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_759841_1 **PAC:** Rs. 2,10,82,602/- **Last Date:** 28.04.2025 05.00 pm, **Name of Work:** Laying 11 KV UG cable on Turnkey basis and shifting RMUs and Transformers in connection with road widening from Mangalapuram to Vavara Ambalam under Electrical section Mangalapuram.

O/o the Chief Engineer (P&SCM) Vydyuthi Bhavanam, Thiruvananthapuram

E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_758473_1 **PAC:** Rs. 20,18,52,216/- **Last Date:** 29.04.2025 03.00 pm
Materials to be supplied: 1) Transformer Oil Type-I-780 KL 2) Transformer Oil Type-II- 1100 KL

Tender Extension Notice

O/o the Deputy Chief Engineer, Electrical Circle, Thodupuzha, Idukki

E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_753748_1 **PAC:**Rs. 5,57,55,000/- **Last Date:** 24.04.2025 11.00 am
Name of Work: Supply and construction of 11KV line using HT covered Conductor on TURNKEY basis under Dyuthi Special Scheme at various locations of Electrical Division Kattappana & Peermade under Electrical Circle, Thodupuzha. **E-Tender ID** No.2025_KSEB_754649_1 **PAC:**Rs. 14,63,14,682/- **Last Date:** 25.04.2025 11.00 am **Name of Work:** Supply of Materials, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Work Construction of LT Three Phase and Single Phase line, Conversion of single phase line to Three phase line and Reconductoring of Single phase and Three phase line by using Covered Conductor Rabbit on turnkey basis at ES Vandanmedu-Package1 under Elercrical Circle, Thodupuzha.
E-Tender ID No.2025_KSEB_754851_1 **PAC:Rs.** 7,46,92,000/- **Last Date:** 28.04.2025 11.00 am **Name of Work:** Supply, Construction, Conversion and Reconductoring of LT ABC on TURNKEY basis at different locations of Sections in Electrical Division Kattappana under Electrical Circle Thodupuzha- package 3.
Visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in and www.kseb.in Ref : PR/MC1/E556/E-tender/2025-26

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600,),
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/35/2024 Date : 21.04.2025

RE-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of Insecticides and Test Kits for NVBDCP & Plan Fund for the year 2024 -2025.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	No. items
1.	KMSCL/ED/NVBDCP & PLAN - TEST KITS/RT/ 2025/006 Dtd. 21/04/2025	07
2.	KMSCL/ED/INS-NVBDCP & PLAN/RT /2025/005 dtd. 21/04/2025	05

Last date and time of online uploading of tender - 07.05.2025, 5.00 pm.
Date and time of opening of Technical bid - 13.04.2025 11.30 am.

Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

INBRIEF

Trainee pilot killed in a crash in Gujarat's Amreli

A trainee pilot lost his life when a trainer aircraft crashed in a residential area of Amreli district, Gujarat, on Tuesday afternoon. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has despatched a team for a probe. The trainee pilot, 22-year-old Aniket Mahajan, was a student of the Vision Flying Training Institute. He was carrying out a solo flight at the time of the accident. The aircraft involved is a Tecnam P2008. Visuals show rescue workers pulling out a charred body from the remains of the aircraft. Reports say that the crash happened in a residential area around 12.30 p.m. The aircraft fell on a tree before crashing into an open plot of land.

Eight killed as vehicle falls off bridge in M.P.'s Damoh

Five women, and two girls and a boy, were killed on Tuesday after a sports utility vehicle (SUV) in which they were travelling skidded and fell off a bridge in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, a police officer said. Nohata police station in-charge Arvind Singh told *The Hindu* that the incident took place at about 9.45 a.m. in Rond village, and that all the victims belonged to one family. The SUV had about 12-13 passengers at the time of the accident, Mr. Singh said. "Some of the injured are under treatment at the District Hospital, while one or two critically injured persons have been referred to the Jabalpur Medical College via a green corridor," he said.

Saudi Arabia is a force of positivity and stability: Modi

The Prime Minister receives warm welcome in the historic city of Jeddah; he describes the energy-rich kingdom as 'one of India's most valued partners, a trusted friend and a strategic ally'

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by members of the Indian diaspora on his arrival in Jeddah on Tuesday. ANI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia after terrorists killed at least 26 Indians in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir. Official sources said that bilateral discussions between the Saudi and Indian sides took place, though Mr. Modi decided to leave hours after landing in the Gulf kingdom.

Earlier, Mr. Modi reached the historic city of Jeddah on Tuesday for a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia. Before leaving for the visit, the Prime Minister said bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia had gathered "significant momentum" in recent years and described the Gulf kingdom as a "force of positivity and stability".

"India values our historic relations with Saudi Arabia. Bilateral ties have gained significant momentum in the last decade. I look forward to participating in the second meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council. I will also be interacting with the Indian community there," said the Prime Minister in a pre-departure statement. As a special gesture, the Prime Minister's aircraft was escorted by F15 aircraft of the Royal Saudi Air Force in the Saudi airspace.

In an interview with Arab News, Saudi Arabia's leading English publication, Mr. Modi described the energy-rich kingdom as "one of India's most valued partners, a trusted friend and a strategic ally." "In a world full of uncertainties, our bond stands strong, as a pillar of stability." The Prime Minister described Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as a "strong advocate of our bilateral ties."

"Every time I have met him, His Royal Highness has left a deep impression on me. His insights, his forward-thinking vision and his passion for fulfilling the aspirations of his people are truly remarkable," said Mr. Modi in his remarks about the Saudi Crown Prince who is also the Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. Mr. Modi was scheduled to hold the bilateral discussion as part of the Strategic Partnership Council with Crown Prince bin Salman.

Mr. Modi said India and Saudi Arabia were working on a Bilateral Investment Treaty. "We consider Saudi Arabia as a force of positivity and stability in the region. As maritime neighbours, India and Saudi Arabia share a natural interest in safeguarding peace and stability in the region," said Mr. Modi.

Indian election process acclaimed globally, says EC

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked the Election Commission during his visit to the United States, the poll body on Tuesday said that any misinformation being spread, by anyone, regarding Indian elections was not only a sign of disrespect towards the law but also would bring disrepute to the thousands of elected representatives belonging to their own political party.

It also demotivates lakhs of election staff who work untiringly and transparently during elections, a senior EC official said.

'Completely absurd'

All Indian elections are held as per law and the scale and accuracy with which elections are held in India are widely acclaimed across the world, the EC official said.

"The entire nation is aware that each election process, including the preparation of electoral rolls, polling and counting, etc., are all held by government staff and that too in the presence of authorised representatives formally appointed by political parties and candidates from polling station up to constituency level," the official said.

"After any unfavourable verdict by the voters, trying to defame the Election Commission by saying that it is compromised, is completely absurd," the official added.

The EC's reaction comes a day after Mr. Gandhi alleged, while in the U.S., that the Election Commission was "compromised", citing the "unusual" increase in voter turnout in the last two hours of voting during the Maharashtra Assembly election.

'Rahul is trying to divert attention'

The BJP on Tuesday again targeted Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, over his comments on the Election Commission, stating that it was an attempt to divert attention from the *National Herald* case. At a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Nalin Kohli questioned the "silence" of the senior leadership of the Congress, including the Gandhis, on charges in the prosecution complaint filed by the Enforcement Directorate in the *National Herald* case.

'Reschedule work hours to mitigate effect of heatwaves'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour Ministry has advised all States and Union Territories to take effective measures to reduce the impact of extreme heatwaves on workers and labourers engaged in different sectors.

Talking to presspersons here on Tuesday, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that the managements of mines and factories would be asked to allow a slower pace of work, flexible schedules, two-person crews during times of extreme heat, and proper ventilation in underground mines.

Various arms of the Labour Ministry will conduct awareness sessions about the causes and impact of heatwaves, recognising heat stress, and preventive strategies.

Webinar on arthritis to be held on April 27

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

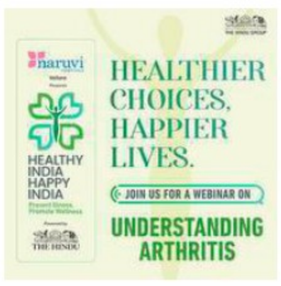
Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in association with *The Hindu*, will present a webinar on "Understanding arthritis" from 11.30 a.m. on April 27, as part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" webinar series. This 15-part series has the theme of "Prevent illness, promote wellness".

This session, the ninth in the series, will focus on rheumatoid arthritis. The panel of experts includes N. Raja, senior consultant rheumatologist, Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore. Dr. Raja will speak on "Types of arthritis and their symptoms".

Treatment options

S. Sham, senior consultant rheumatologist, Kauvery Hospital, Alwarpet, Chennai, will discuss "Treatment options for arthritis, including the role of steroids and emerging medications". M.M. Kavitha, senior consultant rheumatologist, Kauvery Hospital, Radial Road, Chennai, will explain "How arthritis is diagnosed: lab tests, imaging methods, and their interpretation". Soma Basu, Senior Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*, will moderate the discussion.

An e-certificate of participation will be issued to all attendees. To register, visit newsth.live/HIHIUIE or scan the QR code.



UPSC declares final result of civil services examination, three of top five are women

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Union Public Service Commission on Tuesday declared the final results of the Civil Services Examination, 2024, recommending 1,009 candidates for appointment to the IAS, IFS, IPS, and other Central Services across the country.

Shakti Dubey of Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, secured the first rank in the all-India exam, which had over 9.92 lakh applicants.

In a statement, the UPSC announced that about 28% of the recommended candidates were women, and of the top five candidates, three were women with first, second and fourth ranks. Among the top 25, 11 were women.

Following Ms. Dubey on the list of five toppers were Harshita Goyal (second), Dongre Archit Parag (third), Shah Margi Chirag (fourth), and Akash Garg (five).

Shakti Dubey, who topped the civil services examination 2024, with her father outside the Union Public Service Commission. PTI

The recommended candidates will be appointed to different services based on the vacancies. The UPSC said that for this year, there were 1,129 vacancies across the IAS, IFS, IPS, and Central Services Group A and Group B. The IAS had 180 slots, while the IFS had 55 and IPS 147.

For many of the rankholders, this was the second or third attempt at cracking the exam. Some of the selected candidates told *The Hindu* that the journey of clearing the exam was challenging at different stages, and one should be prepared to work hard and persevere through the emotional roller-coaster that preparation for the exam put aspirants through.

Ms. Dubey had studied at the University of Allahabad and Banaras Hindu University before starting her preparation. With a background in biochemistry at the undergraduate level, she cleared the exam with the optional subject of political science and international relations, the UPSC said.

It was Ms. Goyal's third attempt. "I had not been able to clear prelims in the first two attempts. Getting AIR 2 is unbelievable. It was a long journey filled with uncertainties," she told *The Hindu*.

She added that while the journey to clearing the exams might be long and riddled with challenges, aspirants should always "remember why they are doing this", and "not pressure themselves to study for any particular rank".

"I didn't have any fixed schedule for studying. I found my own pattern to make it work and that is what students should try and do, I think," she said. Her first preference was the IAS, through which she hoped to work for the uplift of women and children living in slums.

While declaring the final results, the UPSC noted that over 5.83 lakh students appeared for the preliminary examination, out of which 14,627 qualified for the main examination held in September 2024. Of them, 2,845 candidates qualified and progressed to the personality test, from which 1,009 candidates were selected.

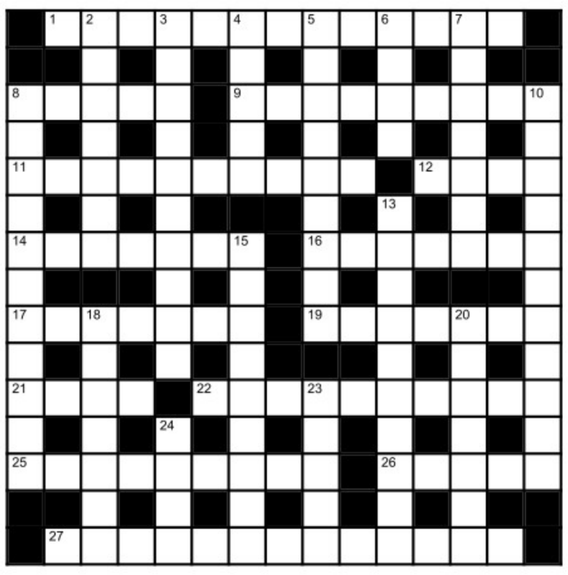
The UPSC said it had put a total of 230 candidates on the reserve list and had declared the candidature of 241 candidates as provisional. A total of 45 persons with disabilities had been recommended against 50 vacancies across the services.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD + 14466

(set by Dr. X)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Day touring exotic Spain is so cool (13)
8 Expression used figuratively by tense guy (5)
9 Irresponsible rogue insulting new tenor (9)
11 The best part of less hair - no knots! (5,5)
12 Lovely new diamonds (4)
14 Devious minister expressing surprise at inauguration is acting (7)
16 One retaliating with fury to tackle extremes of vice (7)
17 Adult club entertaining women on vacation (5-2)
19 Interject as wasted hosts argue (5,2)
21 Possum energetically turns to catch birds (4)
22 Buffet in canteen beside lake for 100th anniversary (10)
25 Hurt by curtailment of rapprochement across border (9)
26 Leers as lady goes wild (5)
27 Theft a lot know about is subject of considerable gossip (4,2,3,4)

Down

2 / 10 What person pressing clothes will do to resolve all minor difficulties (4,3,3,8)
3 Giving sexual satisfaction to naughty ladies on vacation in Prague (10)
4 Son craving to become smart (5)
5 Single guy drinking wine with model is distinguished (9)
6 Good sense of rising star winning Oscar (4)
7 Join stylish girl touring large Chinese city (7)
8 Nut on television halted a broadcast about ruler (7,4)
10 See 2
13 Supporting fight to crush each cartel (7,3)
15 Shimmering pale flame is national symbol of Canada (5,4)
18 Cactus flourishing in a pot outside university (7)
20 Woman, upset and miserable getting painful infection of finger (7)
23 Jerk abandoning wife and little one (5)
24 Founder abducted by rebels in Kenya (4)

SUDOKU

4							7	5
8		5			2		1	
					4	3		
	6	7		2				
5				7				9
				9		4	2	
		9	3					
	1		2			9		3
2	5							1

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	P	R	O	C	R	A	S	T	I	N	A	T	E	
		E		O		R		A		A		O		
P	E	C	A	N		G	O	T	H	R	O	U	G	H
R		Y		S		O		T		D		G		O
E	X	C	I	T	A	T	I	O	N		W	H	I	T
S		L		R				O		R		E		T
T	H	E	M	I	L	L		I	C	E	F	R	E	E
I				C		E		N		C				M
G	E	N	E	T	I	C		G	R	O	W	S	U	P
I		E		S		H				G		M		E
O	V	U	M		H	E	A	V	E	N	L	I	E	R
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S	T	R	E	N	U	O	U	S		S	I	T	E	D
		O		C		U		T		E		E		
	U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	3	6	9	8	5	7	4	2
7	4	8	2	1	3	5	6	9
9	5	2	6	7	4	1	8	3
2	8	1	3	4	7	9	5	6
4	6	7	5	9	8	3	2	1
3	9	5	1	2	6	4	7	8
6	2	4	7	3	9	8	1	5
8	1	9	4	5	2	6	3	7
5	7	3	8	6	1	2	9	4

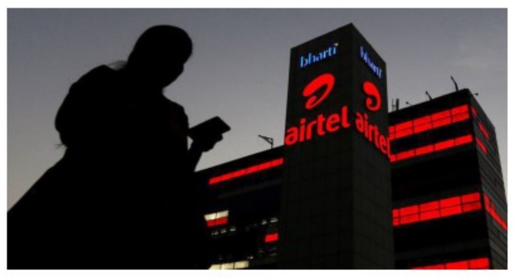
FAITH

Obeying the devotee

Thirumazhisai Azhvar was the son of sage Bhargava. He was abandoned by his parents and was brought up by a basket weaver. Peyazhvar wanted to bring Thirumazhisai Azhvar into the Sri Vaishnava fold, said V.S. Karunakaracharia in a discourse. Peyazhvar first planted some saplings upside down, with the roots at the top, and the top end of each sapling buried in the soil. He tended the plants with care. Thirumazhisai Azhvar asked Peyazhvar how the plants would grow, with their roots pointing upwards, and not fixed in the soil? Peyazhvar said Thirumazhisai Azhvar had taken many wrong paths, in the hope that one of them would help him attain moksha. Just as upside down plants would never grow, so also travelling on the wrong spiritual path would never lead to moksha. Thirumazhisai Azhvar realised that he had made wrong choices, and became Peyazhvar's disciple.

He visited many temples and sang the praises of Lord Narayana. But his love for Lord Sarangapani of Kumbakonam was special. In many places we find Vishnu reclining between two rivers. And Kumbakonam is one such place, where Sarangapani lies between the Cauvery and Arasalaru. Upon seeing Lord Sarangapani, Thirumazhisai Azhvar asked, "Are you tired because of walking in Your Rama avatara? Do your legs ache because of this? Is that why You recline here? Rise and speak to me." In archa form, the Lord is immobile, but in response to Thirumazhisai Azhvar's words, Lord Sarangapani rose. Thirumazhisai Azhvar immediately said, "Stay as you are." And the Lord stopped rising. So even today, we find Sarangapani with His head slightly raised.

INBRIEF



Bharti Airtel to buy 5G spectrum from Adani

Bharti Airtel will buy 5G telecom spectrum from a unit of Adani Enterprises, the company said on Tuesday. Airtel and its unit Bharti Hexacom have signed agreements with Adani Data Networks to acquire rights to use 400 MHz of high-frequency spectrum across six circles including Gujarat, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh. The companies did not disclose the financial details of the deal. Airtel is focussed on expanding its 5G network and user base. REUTERS

Govt. re-appoints Rabi Sankar as RBI Deputy Governor

The Centre has re-appointed T. Rabi Sankar as Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), for a period of one year with effect from May 3, 2025, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. This is his second extension. Mr. Sankar is in charge of foreign exchange, currency management and government accounts department in the RBI. He was appointed as the deputy governor in May 2021. He was the executive director of RBI prior to that.

IBI Media Technologies acquires RoofandFloor brand

IBI Media Technologies Private Ltd. has announced the acquisition of 'RoofandFloor' brand from *The Hindu* Group's KSL Digital Ventures Ltd. With this, 'RoofandFloor.com', a digital real estate platform, will operate as a separate, standalone vertical within the IBI Media portfolio. Ilavarasan P., founder and CEO, IBI Media said, the move would strengthen their national brand architecture while preserving their hyperlocal strategy in key cities.

Gold breaches ₹1-lakh mark as dollar index slides on tariff tension

The spike mirrors the rally in gold prices during the first wave of COVID, when it had breached the ₹50,000-mark for the first time in July 2020

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Gold prices on Tuesday soared above the psychological mark of ₹1 lakh per 10 grams for the first time ever as the U.S. dollar continued to slide amid treasury bond sell-offs and tariff related uncertainties.

The spot price of gold was quoted at ₹1,01,245 for 24 carat per 10 gram, while the gold future was proved at ₹99,000 per 10 grams.

The spike mirrors the rally in gold prices during the first wave of COVID, when it had breached the ₹50,000-mark for the first time in July 2020, as the global economy contracted, on weaker dollar and supply chain disruptions-led trade headwinds, according to analysts.

For India, the second largest gold consumer, mostly by household buyers, followed by China, this eye-popping price level is significant.

This year, gold prices have surged 30% and the rally has sustained for 128 weeks, indicating further rise till some clarity is established.

Renisha Chainani, Head, Research at Augmont said, "Gold has crossed the psychological level of $3,500 an ounce as the dollar fell to a three-year low below 98. President Trump increased pressure on the Federal Reserve, calling for a dramatic rate reduction and even considering replacing Chair Powell."

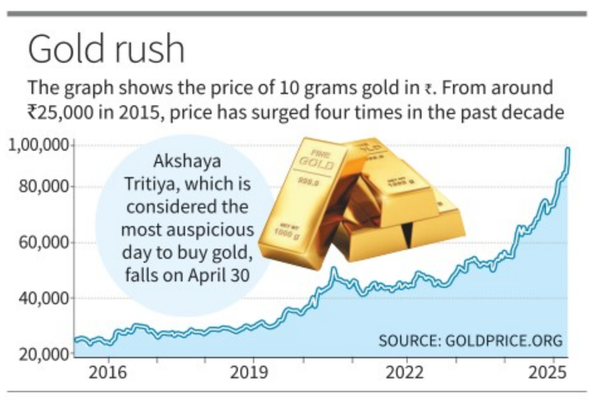
"Trump criticised Fed Chair Jerome Powell again on Monday, warning that the U.S. economy will slow unless interest rates are cut promptly," she said.

"Furthermore, amidst the trade war, China accused the U.S. of abusing tariffs and warned governments not to seek an agreement with the U.S. that compromised Beijing's interests. Together, these considerations have led to strong safe-haven demand for gold, which is now up 30% this year," she added.

Stating that the gold price rally would continue Anitha Rangan, economist, Equirus Securities, said the rally would be driven by reserve accumulation, geopolitical uncertainty and comparison of past rallies.

"Gold as a percentage of reserves is the highest now [since 2000], and has seen a meaningful increase since 2021. While we have not had geopolitical conflicts like now in the last three decades, the peaks of 12-13% as of 2021 were also seen in 2000 and 2011. But since 2019, from 12%, it has climbed to more than 18% in 2024. In 2011, reserve build could be a driver, but 2000 onwards, the peak which sustained was not led by reserve build," she said on the reserve accumulation factor.

"The short-term outlook on gold will remain strong if trade tension escalates between the U.S. and China. However, long-term outlook remains bullish, supported by strong central bank purchases and geopolitical uncertainties," said Satish Dondapati, fund manager, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company.


Gold rush
The graph shows the price of 10 grams gold in ₹. From around ₹25,000 in 2015, price has surged four times in the past decade
Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered the most auspicious day to buy gold, falls on April 30
1,00,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
2016
2019
2022
2025
SOURCE: GOLDPRICE.ORG

IMF cuts global growth over Trump tariffs, policy uncertainty

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON, DC

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut its growth projections across the board, in response to the higher tariffs and policy uncertainty that are the outcome of U.S. President Donald Trump's April 2 near-universal import tariff policy.

World output in 2025 is projected to grow at 2.8%, half a percentage point less than the January projection. It is expected to be 3% in 2026, 0.1 percentage points less than the January forecast. The numbers were released in the April 2025 *World Economic Outlook: A Critical Juncture amid Policy Shifts,* to mark the launch of the World Bank IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, DC on Tuesday.

For India, growth is forecast to be 6.2 % in the current fiscal year (i.e., year ending March 31, 2026), supported by private consumption especially in rural areas, but it is at 0.3 percentage points lower than in the January 2025 forecast due to global uncertainty and trade tensions, the IMF said. India's economic growth for the next fiscal year is projected to be 6.3%. Consumer price changes for India are projected to be 4.2% and 4.1% in the current and next fiscal years respectively. "We are entering a new era as the global economic system that has operated for the last eighty years is being reset," IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said at a briefing on Tuesday, as he pointed to U.S. effective tariff rates being at their highest levels in more than 100 years as well as the higher tariff rates on the U.S. "Beyond the abrupt increase in tariffs, the surge in policy uncertainty is a major driver of the economic outlook," Mr. Gourinchas said.

Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas

Downturn risks

The IMF released a range of growth forecasts given the unusual levels of policy uncertainty, with the reference forecasts above based on the tariff and counter-tariff measures announced as of April 4.

While the IMF was not predicting a global downturn, the risks it may happen this year have increased "substantially" from 17% to 30%, Mr. Gourinchas said.

While global growth remained well above recession levels, all regions would be negatively impacted this year and next, Mr. Gourinchas said, adding that the disinflation process had been impeded, with inflation being revised up by 0.1 percentage points.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	79,596	0.24
US Dollar	85.19	-0.04
Gold	1,01,600	1.80
Brent oil	67.55	2.33

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2445.50	2.80
Adani Ports	1233.20	-9.90
Apollo Hosp	7088.50	-54.00
Asian Paints	2432.00	-13.00
Axis Bank	1216.80	-6.20
Bajaj Auto	8141.00	-106.50
Bajaj Finserv	2077.00	-26.50
Bajaj Finance	9260.50	-13.00
Bharat Elec	303.35	3.40
Bharti Airtel	1852.20	-31.20
Cipla	1528.20	17.10
Coal India	398.60	-1.90
Dr Reddys Lab	1175.00	-2.40
Eicher Motors	5784.00	-26.50
Eternal Ltd.	237.47	3.23
Grasim Ind	2749.40	-7.50
HCL Tech	1479.90	-2.10
HDFC Bank	1961.70	34.60
HDFC Life	712.55	0.35
Hero MotoCorp	3833.60	-83.40
Hindalco	620.10	-1.90
Hind Unilever	2398.70	47.70
ICICI Bank	1416.50	6.70
IndusInd Bank	787.50	-40.70
Infosys	1422.80	-28.20
ITC	433.60	10.75
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	250.56	4.18
JSW Steel	1044.20	10.20
Kotak Bank	2268.80	27.40
L&T	3257.80	-22.70
M&M	2817.10	53.10
Maruti Suzuki	11734.00	-11.00
NestleIndia	2407.30	7.90
NTPC	360.25	-4.30
ONGC	247.78	-2.00
PowerGrid Corp	312.55	-7.45
Reliance Ind	1291.20	-4.30
SBI Life	1619.00	-9.50
State Bank	822.40	5.70
Shriram Finance Ltd.	703.50	0.50
Sun Pharma	1747.40	2.50
TataConsumerProduct	1136.70	15.70
Tata Motors	630.85	0.80
Tata Steel	138.16	-1.02
TCS	3314.40	-7.20
Tech Mahindra	1376.50	3.00
Titan	3337.40	1.30
Trent Ltd.	5323.00	-37.00
UltraTech Cement	11959.00	25.00
Wipro	234.15	-4.30

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 22

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	85.17	85.49
Euro	96.73	97.09
British Pound	112.66	113.09
Japanese Yen (100)	59.73	59.95
Chinese Yuan	11.67	11.71
Swiss Franc	104.22	104.62
Singapore Dollar	64.89	65.15
Canadian Dollar	61.28	61.54
Malaysian Ringitt	19.31	19.41
Australian Dollar	54.18	54.39

Source:Indian Bank

'Sunrise sectors to double India manufacturing'

Press Trust of India
SAN FRANCISCO

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said India plans to increase the share of the manufacturing sector from 12% to 23% over the next two decades, to create jobs and drive economic growth.

India is focusing on 14 identified sunrise sectors like semiconductors, renewable energy components, medical devices, batteries and labour intensive industries, including leather and textile, to enhance the share of manufacturing in GDP, she said while speaking at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, California.

HCL Q4 net up 8% to ₹4,307 cr.

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

HCL Tech Q4 net profit rose 8.1% year-on-year to ₹4,307 crore.

Q4 revenue grew 6.1% to ₹30,246 crore while for the full year, revenue stood at ₹1,17,055 crores, up 6.5%.

HCL Tech reported new deal wins of $2,995 million in Q4, while its total contract value for the full year was $9,268 million.

Addressing the media, CEO C. Vijayakumar said the firm had not witnessed any material impact from U.S. tariffs yet, but cautioned such steps could affect all industries, especially consumer and manufacturing sectors.

GenAI-led efficiency had become central to client strategy, even as discretionary tech spending still remained under pressure, he said in his commentary adding, "AI is a significant opportunity, and we're seeing a strong pipeline of GenAI deals despite broader market uncertainties."

C. Vijayakumar

The firm was confident opportunities would emerge despite current global uncertainties and market pressure.

According to him, HCLTech's telecom business is witnessing quite a growth momentum and currently had access to 30 large telcoms globally.

"Considering the overall performance, HCL Tech achieved moderate growth but effectively managed fiscal situation amid macroeconomic uncertainties," said Biswajit Maity, senior principal analyst at Gartner.

The board declared an interim dividend of ₹18 per share for FY2025-26.

Hiring plans

HCLTech said it hired a total of 7,829 people in FY25 with a net addition of 3,377 in the whole year and 2,665 people during Q4.

"Our hiring for FY26 is expected to be significantly higher than what we did in FY25. We will hire between 2,000 to 3,000 freshers in every quarter," said Ramachandran Sundararajan, chief people officer.

'India relatively less susceptible to external headwinds'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Although dampening global economic outlook can impact India's economic growth through weaker external demand, domestic growth engines such as consumption and investment were relatively less susceptible to external headwinds, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials said in the bank's April bulletin.

Stating an escalation of trade and tariff tensions and the resultant financial market volatility had raised concerns regarding the weakening of global growth in the near term, they said going forward, India was poised to benefit from supply-chain realign-

Global financial conditions are likely to remain volatile.

ments, diversified FDI sources and engagement with global investors seeking resilience and scale, given its already established trade linkages.

"Moreover, India's consistent strength in services exports and remittance inflows continues to provide a vital buffer for the current account," they wrote in the State of the Economy article.

Farm sector boost

"Prospects for the farm sector have been boosted by the forecast of an above normal southwest monsoon for 2025, which could augment farm incomes and keep food prices under check. Headline inflation moderated to a 67-month low of 3.3% in March, mainly due to a moderation in food prices," they wrote.

"Going forward, global financial conditions are likely to stay volatile and EMEs are vulnerable to feedback loops and spillovers which may lead to reigniting of global inflation."

'Banks to migrate to .bank.in by October 31'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

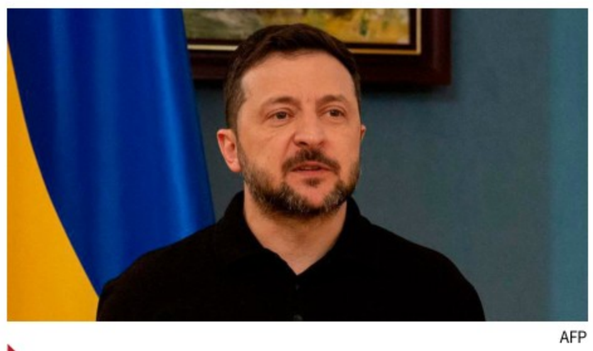
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked all banks to commence the migration of their existing domains to the '.bank.in' domain and complete the process not later than October 31.

This initiative is aimed at strengthening the cybersecurity framework and enhancing public confidence in digital banking and payment systems.

Banks have been asked to contact Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) at sahyog@idrbt.ac.in to begin the registration process.

KYIV

Ukraine ready for direct talks with Russia only after truce: Zelenskyy



AFP

Ukraine will only hold direct talks with Russia after a ceasefire is in place, President Zelenskyy said on Tuesday, as his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump pushes for a quick deal. However, Russia resists a rushed truce. "After the ceasefire, we are ready to sit down in any format," Mr. Zelenskyy told journalists at a briefing. AFP

WASHINGTON

'On the same side of every issue' with Netanyahu, says Trump

AFP

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday said he had spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and that they were united on issues including trade and Iran. "The call went very well — We are on the same side of every issue," Mr. Trump said on his social media platform. AFP

BEIRUT

Islamist leader among two killed in Israeli air strikes south of Beirut

AFP

An Israeli drone strike south of Beirut killed Hussein Atwi, a leader of Hamas-aligned Jamaa Islamiya's armed wing, as he drove to work on Tuesday. Another person died in a separate Israeli strike in Tyre district. Israel continues strikes in Lebanon despite a November truce. AFP

LAHORE

Five persons, including a Christian, arrested in Pakistan for 'blasphemy'

AP

Five people, including a Christian, were arrested for alleged blasphemy in Sargodha in Pakistan's Punjab province, after a mob surrounded the police station demanding action. The suspects, accused of printing blasphemous stickers, are in custody amid tight security as blasphemy remains a volatile issue in Pakistan. PTI

Over 100 U.S. varsities issue letter decrying Trump's 'interference'

'We speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education,' stated the joint letter, issued after Harvard University sued the Trump administration

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

More than 100 U.S. universities and colleges, including Ivy League institutions Princeton and Brown, issued a joint letter on Tuesday condemning President Donald Trump's "political interference" in the education system.

The move comes a day after Harvard University sued the Trump administration, which has threatened to cut funding and impose outside political supervision.

"We speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education," the letter read.

United stance: Demonstrators rally in a protest in Cambridge against the federal government interference in universities. REUTERS

"We are open to constructive reform and do not oppose legitimate government oversight. However, we must oppose undue government intrusion," it said, adding: "We must reject the coercive use of public research funding."

Mr. Trump has sought to bring several prestigious universities to heel over claims they tolerated campus anti-Semitism, threatening their budgets, tax-exempt status and the enrolment of foreign students.

Exchange of ideas

The letter said the universities and colleges were committed to serving as centres where "faculty, students, and staff are free to exchange ideas and opinions across a full range of viewpoints without fear of retribution, censorship, or deportation".

Mr. Trump's war against universities has seen him threaten to cut federal funding over policies meant to encourage diversity among students and staff.

The Republican President has also pursued a wide-ranging immigration crackdown that has expanded to foreign students, revoking their visas, often for little or no reason. The White House has publicly justified its campaign against universities as a reaction to uncontrolled "anti-Semitism" and the desire to reverse diversity programs aimed at addressing historical oppression of minorities.

Pope's funeral to be held on Saturday, says Vatican

Associated Press
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis in his open coffin in the chapel of the Casa Santa Marta, his Vatican residence where he died on Monday. AFP

Cardinals have taken their first decisions following the death of Pope Francis, setting Saturday as the date for his funeral and allowing ordinary faithful to begin paying their final respects starting Wednesday, when his casket is brought into St. Peter's Basilica.

The cardinals met for the first time on Tuesday in the Vatican's synod hall to chart the next steps before a conclave begins to choose Francis's successor, as condolences poured in from around the world grieving history's first Latin American pope.

The cardinals set the funeral for Saturday at 10 a.m. in St. Peter's Square, to be celebrated by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re.

U.S. President Donald Trump has announced he and first lady Melania Trump plan to attend Saturday's funeral.

Argentine President Javier Milei is also expected.

Francis died Monday at age 88 after suffering a stroke that put him in a coma and led his heart to fail.

After the funeral, there are nine days of official mourning, known as the "*novendiali*".

During this period, Cardinals arrive in Rome and meet privately before the conclave.

To give everyone time to assemble, the conclave must begin 15-20 days after the "*sede vacante*" – the "vacant See" – is declared, although it can start sooner if the Cardinals agree.

Israeli strikes kill 14 in Gaza, destroy vital heavy equipment

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed at least 14 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and destroyed bulldozers and other heavy equipment that had been supplied by mediators to clear rubble.

Israel's 18-month offensive against Hamas has destroyed vast areas of Gaza, raising fears that much of it may never be rebuilt. The territory already had a shortage of heavy equipment, which is also needed to rescue people from the rubble after Israeli strikes and to clear vital roads.

A municipality in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza said a strike on its parking garage destroyed nine bulldozers.

Remains of bulldozers hit by an Israeli air strike in Jabaliya. AP

The strikes also destroyed a water tanker and a mobile generator, and a truck used to pump sewage, the Jabaliya al-Nazla municipality said.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants.

Russian drones strike Odesa, a day before allied talks in London

Associated Press
KYIV

Russian drones battered the Ukrainian port city of Odesa in a night-time attack, local authorities said on Tuesday, less than 24 hours after a purported Easter ceasefire unilaterally declared by Moscow ended and just over a day before Ukrainian, British, French and U.S. officials are due to meet in London to discuss the war.

Anticipation is building over whether diplomatic efforts can stop more than three years of fighting since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour. Hostility has run deep between the two sides since Russia invaded and illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula in 2014.

Odesa came under a "massive attack" by Russian drones overnight, injuring at least three people, the head of Odesa regional administration, Oleh Kiper, wrote on his Telegram page on Tuesday.

A residential building in a densely populated urban area, civilian infrastructure and an educational facility were hit, he said.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 54 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, marking a resumption of long-range attacks that have blasted civilian areas and sown terror throughout the war.

Myanmar rebels to hand key city back to junta; ceasefire extended to April 30

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

A Myanmar ethnic minority armed group is preparing to hand a captured city back to the military in a Beijing-brokered deal, China's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, as residents reported junta troops already returning.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) ousted Myanmar's military from the city of Lashio in August 2024, capturing their northeastern command and a key trade route to China.

Analysts say it was the worst strategic loss the military suffered since seizing power in a 2021 coup that sparked a civil war pitting the generals against anti-coup fighters and long-active ethnic armed groups.

Members of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) patrolling in Myanmar's state of Lashio. AFP

But Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told reporters the MNDAA is set to relinquish the city to the military without firing a shot.

"At the joint invitation of both sides, China recently dispatched a ceasefire monitoring team to Lashio, Myanmar, to oversee the ceasefire between the Myanmar military and the MNDAA and to witness the smooth and orderly handover of Lashio's urban area," he said.

China is a major ally and arms supplier of the junta but also maintains ties with ethnic rebel groups that hold territory near its border like the MNDAA, which can muster around 8,000 fighters.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's junta prolonged a ceasefire declared after last month's devastating earthquake to April 30, after aid groups and international mediators called for an extension to ease relief efforts.

The junta said it would cease attacking its myriad armed opponents following the magnitude-7.7 quake which has killed more than 3,700.

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Read The Hindu every day to participate in the contest.
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Scan QR code or visit newsth.live/SSIPLPA to take the quiz.

PROLIFIC

Rahul overtakes Warner, becomes fastest to 5000 runs in the IPL

SANDEEP SAXENA

DC's K.L. Rahul became the fastest player to reach 5000 runs in the IPL during the match against LSG. Rahul reached the landmark in his 130th innings, overtaking David Warner's previously held record (135). He is now only the eighth batter to cross the 5000-run mark in IPL, joining the elite list led by Virat Kohli who has scored 8326 runs.

TOO MUCH TO DO

Russell isn't the only one who is struggling at the moment: Bravo

RITU RAJ KONWAR

Andre Russell is not the only one who is struggling at the moment... when he walks in to bat every time, the run rate is at 14, 15 (per over). So the work needs to be done on top... we give him a chance to finish our games like he is accustomed to (for KKR) — KKR mentor Dwayne Bravo after the loss to GT.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT

We know that partnerships win games, not just individuals: Helmot

K.V.S. GIRI

Our plans aren't reckless batting, our plans are still smart batting. We know that partnerships win games, not just individuals. What is born from good partnerships is a high individual score. We saw that with Ishan Kishan in the first game and Abhishek Sharma last time — SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot.

STUDENT

Tilak keen on learning from Mumbai Indians seniors

K.V.S. GIRI

I have seniors who have won World Cups when I was a kid. I will take as much experience as possible from them about playing in ICC tournaments, because I haven't played any. I'd take their IPL experience, playing 200 matches like Rohit Sharma. Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yadav also completed 100 games — MI's Tilak Varma.

Rahul, Axar guide Capitals home in a clinical chase after Mukesh's exploits

Porel, too, comes good for the visiting team with a quick-fire fifty; LSG loses its way after a breezy opening stand between Markram and Marsh

IPL-18

Dhruva Prasad
LUCKNOW

K.L. Rahul passed the loyalty test with flying colours as he consigned his former team Lucknow Super Giants to an eight-wicket defeat at the Ekana Stadium here on Tuesday to consolidate Delhi Capitals' second spot in the Indian Premier League standings.

A pursuit of 160 in tricky conditions was right up a technically sound Rahul's alley, and he responded with a risk-free 40-ball fifty before imparting the finishing touches with a bit of flair – a six over deep mid-wicket.

When the ball was holding in the surface, he accessed the areas behind the wicket against the pacers for his first two boundaries.

Breaking the shackles

When the spinners were operating, there was a brief lull during his 69-run partnership with Abishek Porel for the second wicket. But after sizing up the conditions, Porel broke the shackles with a reverse lap for four off Aiden Markram in the 10th over. The left-hander and Rahul picked a six each off Ravi Bishnoi's overpitched deliveries in the next over, and when Porel mistimed a heave on leg-side, DC needed less than seven runs an over with more than eight overs remaining.

Skipper Axar Patel simplified the task with two sixes off Bishnoi in the 14th. By the time he and Rahul punished Shardul Thakur's short deliveries with a six and a four, respectively, it was a foregone conclusion.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, Markram and Mitchell Marsh gave LSG a strong foundation, putting on an 87-run stand, but the middle-order failed to consolidate.

A loud cheer from the crowd followed when Markram greeted local boy Vipraj Nigam with a huge six. But the decibel levels dropped when Markram looked to clear the longer boundary and holed out at deep point off Dushmantha Chameera.

Markram's departure triggered a collapse, with Nicholas Pooran, Abdul Samad and Marsh perishing in the span of three overs. Pooran fell to Mitchell Starc while Mukesh Kumar sent back Samad and Marsh in the same over.

While David Miller and Ayush Badoni gave the host a late flourish with a 49-run partnership, Rishabh Pant's demotion to No. 7 raised eyebrows.

Coming in to face the final two deliveries of the innings, Pant failed to put bat on ball, leaving his team with a below-par total.

Proving a point: Rahul was rock solid in his first match against his former team. SANDEEP SAXENA

Next assignment

LSG: April 27 vs MI
Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.

DC: April 27 vs RCB
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Aiden Markram c Stubbs b Chameera 52 *(33b, 2x4, 3x6)*, Mitchell Marsh b Mukesh 45 *(36b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Nicholas Pooran b Starc 9 *(5b, 2x4)*, Abdul Samad c & b Mukesh 2 *(8b)*, David Miller (not out) 14 *(15b, 1x4)*, Ayush Badoni **(Impact Player for Marsh)** b Mukesh 36 *(21b, 6x4)*, Rishabh Pant b Mukesh 0 *(2)*; Extras (w-1): 1; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 159.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-87 (Markram, 9.6 overs), 2-99 (Pooran, 11.2), 3-107 (Samad, 13.2), 4-110 (Marsh, 13.6), 5-159 (Badoni, 19.4), 6-159 (Pant, 19.6).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Axar 4-0-29-0, Starc 4-0-25-1, Mukesh 4-0-33-4, Chameera 3-0-25-1, Vipraj 1-0-14-0, Kuldeep 4-0-33-0.

DELHI CAPITALS
Abishek Porel c Miller b Markram 51 *(36b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Karun Nair b Markram 15 *(9b, 2x4, 1x6)*, K.L. Rahul (not out) 57 *(42b, 3x4, 3x6)*, Axar Patel (not out) 34 *(20b, 1x4, 4x6)*; Extras (lb-1, w-3): 4; Total (for two wkts. in 17.5 overs): 161.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-36 (Karun, 3.4), 2-105 (Porel, 11.5).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Shardul 2-0-28-0, Digvesh 4-0-24-0, Prince 2.5-0-23-0, Markram 3-0-30-2, Avesh 3-0-19-0, Bishnoi 3-0-36-0.

Toss: DC.
PoM: Mukesh.
Delhi Capitals won by eight wickets with 13 deliveries to spare.

Double delight: Bumrah and Smriti produced remarkable performances. ANI

Bumrah, Smriti win top Wisden awards

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

India pacer Jasprit Bumrah has been named as the Leading Men's Cricketer in the World in the 2025 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, with compatriot Smriti Mandhana picking up the women's award.

Stunning 2024

Bumrah was given the honour by the sport's "bible" after a stunning 2024 in which he excelled in red-ball and white-ball cricket.

The 31-year-old picked up 71 Test wickets at an average of less than 15 and was named player of the tournament as India won the T20 World Cup in the Americas.

In the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, Bumrah bagged 32 wickets at an average of 13.06.

Smriti, 28, made it an Indian double by being named as the Leading Women's Cricketer in the World.

The batter scored 1,659 runs across all formats in 2024 – the most by a woman in a calendar year of international cricket.

West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran was named as the game's leading T20 cricketer.

SRH needs to get its act together as it faces MI

Anirudh Velamuri
HYDERABAD

A lot can change in a week. Only net run rate had separated Sunrisers Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians when the two locked horns at the Wankhede Stadium last Thursday.

MI comfortably won that contest and followed it up with an emphatic victory over Chennai Super Kings. It now sits three places and four points above SRH heading into a rematch at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here on Wednesday.

While Sunrisers mathematically remain in contention to finish in the top four, they need to make the most of their home form.

The only two times SRH's batting unit, one of the strongest on paper, has clicked this year have been at home on a belter, which saw Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma notch up centuries. With no wins on the road so far, home comfort will be key in determining where SRH finishes when the group-stage curtain falls.

MI, on the other hand, heads into the fixture on the back of three successive wins. After a slow start to the season, the Hardik Pandya-led unit has slowly built momentum to make a surge up the table.

All eyes will also be on local boy Tilak Varma, who will be keen to emulate fellow Hyderabadi and Gujarat Titans pacer Mohammed Siraj's heroics and spoil Sunrisers' party.

Dale Steyn, SRH's former bowling coach, had predicted that the IPL would witness its first 300-run total when these two sides faced off last week.

The flat Hyderabad pitch might be the perfect arena to make it come true. Which team will break the ceiling first? Wednesday will show.

Exchanging pleasantries: Rival coaches Vettori and Jayawardene interact on the eve of the match. K.V.S. GIRI

Today's match

SUNRISERS vs MUMBAI INDIANS

Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 24
SRH 10 | MI 14

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by **four wickets**, 2025

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIOHOTSTAR

Finishing is an issue for Knight Riders, says Bravo

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

After another batting failure against Gujarat Titans resulting in Kolkata Knight Riders' fifth loss in the IPL, mentor Dwayne Bravo admitted that finishing had been an issue with the defending champion this season.

With Andre Russell and Rinku Singh not being able to rise to the occasion, Bravo said the team had been looking to find the right combination in batting.

"It's a concern. Definitely, those are things that are discussed. You always try to bug the players who have been there and done it before. There is a fine line between bugging a player and trying to come up with the best combination. We can also try to make some changes, necessary adjustments to give the team that spot that is missing," Bravo said after KKR's loss to GT at the Eden Gardens on Monday.

Bravo said KKR bowlers fought back to restrict GT for less than 200, but the batting unit did not perform well. GT spinner Sai Kishore praised his team's batters for scoring 198 and putting pressure on KKR. "On a challenging pitch, batsmanship comes into play," he added.

About Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan, he said: "We, as a team, never doubted him, never doubted his abilities. He's the best T20 bowler in the world Good that he's back among wickets. He's back in form. It really helps the team's confidence".

Tough times: Bravo says the KKR batters have been low on confidence. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Gujarat Titans	8	6	2	12	1.104
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	12	0.657
Royal Challengers	8	5	3	10	0.472
Punjab Kings	8	5	3	10	0.177
Lucknow Super Giants	9	5	4	10	-0.054
Mumbai Indians	8	4	4	8	0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	3	5	6	0.212
Rajasthan Royals	8	2	6	4	-0.633
Sunrisers Hyderabad	7	2	5	4	-1.217
Chennai Super Kings	8	2	6	4	-1.392

** Till the LSG-DC match on April 22*

Humpy escapes with a draw vs Kashlinskaya; Zhu beats Divya

Hitting back: Zhu got the better of Divya. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

CHESS

P.K. Ajith Kumar
PUNE

After her terrible loss to Koneru Humpy, Zhu Jiner showed her resilience and class to post a badly-needed win that has rekindled her hopes of getting the top prize at the FIDE Women's Grand Prix at Amanora-The Fern.

The second seed from China, however, has Humpy for company at the top of the table going into Wednesday's final round.

The top-seeded Indian was a bit lucky though, against Alina Kashlinskaya. Just when it seemed the fourth seed from Poland would finally be able to have something to cheer about after going through some harrowing time here, she blundered from what looked a winning position.

Humpy could heave a sigh of relief, and she now has six points. Even after the devastating loss, Kashlinskaya was able to keep her humour intact.

"It is better that all things are going badly in one tournament rather than in different ones throughout the year," she said.

Nothing went wrong for Zhu in her game against Divya Deshmukh though, after the two women began the day in the joint second position.

Even after the loss, Divya remains in second position, but one point behind the leaders.

The results (eighth round):
Munguntuul Batkhuyag (Mng) 2.5 drew with Polina Shuvalova (Rus) 4.5; Zhu Jiner (Chn) 6 bt Divya Deshmukh 5; Alina Kashlinskaya (Pol) 3 drew with Koneru Humpy 6; Nurgyul Salimova (Bul) 3.5 drew with R. Vaishali 3.5.
Salome Melia (Geo) 2.5 drew with D. Harika 4.

Final round pairings: Vaishali v Melia; Humpy v Salimova; Divya v Kashlinskaya; Shuvalova v Zhu; Harika v Batkhuyag.

INBRIEF

Shanto holds the key as opening Test evenly poised

Najmul Hossain Shanto hit an unbeaten 60 as Bangladesh fought back against Zimbabwe on a rain-truncated day three of the first Test in Sylhet on Tuesday. Skipper Shanto's knock helped Bangladesh reach 194 for four in its second innings with a 112-run overall lead before bad light forced an early stumps.

The scores: Bangladesh 191 & 194 for four in 57 overs (Mominul Haque 47, Najmul Hossain Shanto 60 batting) vs Zimbabwe 273.

Forest burns hapless Spurs; Betis cuts down Girona

Nottingham Forest beat Tottenham 2-1 to move into third place in the Premier League and deepen the gloom at White Hart Lane. Elliot Anderson's deflected shot bagged Forest's opener after five minutes, and Chris Wood added a second with a header 11 minutes later. Although Spurs controlled possession in the second half, it took the side until the 87th minute to score, when Richarlison netted a header.

The results: Premier League: Tottenham 1 (Richarlison 87) lost to Nottingham Forest 2 (Anderson 5, Wood 16). **LaLiga:** Girona 1 (Stuani 85) lost to Real Betis 3 (Cardoso 6, Antony 39, Isco 42).

Aman Siwach advances to the second round

India's Aman Siwach eked out a 4-1 win over Abubakir Duisheev of Kyrgyzstan in the opening round of the men's under-17 63kg category of the Asian under-15 and -17 boxing championships in Amman. Anshul Khasa lost 0-5 to Kuanysh Urumbassar of Kazakhstan in men's u-17 70kg.

Biles 'not so sure' about competing at LA Olympics

Simone Biles, the most decorated gymnast in history, said she has yet to decide whether she will take part in her home Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028. "2028 seems so far away. And my body ages. I felt it in Paris. At the end of the competition, I went back to the village, I took the elevator and my body literally collapsed...I got sick for 10 days...So, to be honest, I don't know. We'll see," the 28-year-old, who was chosen Laureus Sportswoman of the Year on Monday.

Alonso has a 'gentleman's agreement' to exit Leverkusen

Bayer Leverkusen and its coach Xabi Alonso have a "gentleman's agreement" that would allow him to leave if one of the clubs he played for during his career calls him up. He played for Liverpool, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich and Real Sociedad.

Smriti Bhasin loses to fifth seed in first round

Smriti Bhasin lost 1-6, 2-6 to fifth seed Vicky van de Peer of Belgium in the first round of the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

Other results: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Eva Korysheva & Aruzhan Nuranbay (Kaz) bt Smriti Bhasin & Sravya Shivani 6-2, 2-6, [11-9]; Elina Nepliy & Aruzhan Sagandykova (Kaz) bt Paavanii Paathak & Anastasia Sergienko 6-4, 6-0; Maftunabonu Kahramonova & Sabrina Olimjanova (Uzb) bt Sandugash Kenzhibayeva (Kaz) & Akanksha Nitture 2-6, 6-3, [10-3].

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Dev Meena soars to a new high in men's pole vault

David stuns Jeswin to take the honours in long jump; Rupal comes from behind to pip Vithya in women's 400m, while Vishal finishes on top among the men

ATHLETICS

Stan Rayan
KOCHI

Pole vaulter Dev Meena is now making breaking records a habit.

Two months after setting the National record at the National Games, the 19-year-old from MP raised it to 5.35m in the 28th National Federation Athletics Championships at the Maharaja's Stadium here on Tuesday.

But it was mixed day for the youngster as he could not achieve the AFI's Asian Championship qualification standard (5.51m).

In the limelight: Dev Meena and Rupal came up with stellar displays. R.K. NITHIN

Rain plays spoilsport

"I had hoped to do 5.40m but rain spoiled things a bit," said Dev, a quartermiler who switched to the pole vault four years ago.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu's P. David, who crossed the 8m mark at the 2023 State Championships, shocked National record holder Jeswin Aldrin to win the long jump.

"I felt I could do 8.20m here but I had two fouls and they appeared to be big jumps," said David whose best came in the fourth round (7.94m).

Jeswin, representing Reliance, held the lead after the second round with 7.83 – his day's best – but he was forced to miss his last three rounds with cramps.

U.P.'s Rupal Chaudhary (52.55s) pulled off a victory from the jaws of defeat in the women's 400m, pipping Tamil Nadu's Vithya Ramraj (52.81) at the post. Vithya appeared to be cruising but could not do anything when Rupal made her big move.

"I shifted to a different gear towards the end," said Rupal.

Tamil Nadu's T.K. Vishal won the men's 400m, an event where Olympian Amoj Jacob had a DNF in the final while National record holder Muhammed Anas pulled out of the semifinal with cramps.

The results (winners only): Men: 400m: T.K. Vishal (TN) 46.19s; **110m hurdles:** Tejas Ashok Shirse (Mah) 13.65s; **long jump:** P. David (TN) 7.94m; **high jump:** Sarvesh Anil Kushare (Mah) 2.26m; **pole vault:** Dev Meena (MP) 5.35m (NR, Old: 5.32); **discus throw:** Nirbhay Singh (Har) 58.13m.
Women: 400m: Rupal Chaudhary (UP) 52.55s; **100m hurdles:** Jyothi Yarraji (Reliance) 13.23s; **discus throw:** Seema (JSW) 57.17m; **heptathlon:** Agasara Nandini (Tel) 5813 pts.

Duplantis leads star-studded cast in Diamond League

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Mondo Duplantis heads a stellar cast of athletes kicking off the 16th Diamond League season in Xiamen on Saturday amid a changing landscape that has seen Michael Johnson launch Grand Slam track series.

Petr Stastny, CEO, Diamond League, insisted that he welcomed competition, but added he thought the 15-meet circuit he oversees was the "backbone" of global athletics, with a record $9.2 million in prize money on offer. "You will get the most comprehensive coverage on the highest possible level of competition in our sport, in track and field. Great arenas, great big crowds," Stastny said.

Johnson is the founder of Grand Slam Track, which debuted in Kingston earlier this month.

Conceived by Johnson as a way of reinvigorating interest in athletics outside of Olympic years, his four-event series aims to showcase more races between the world's best runners, sprinters and hurdlers. There are no field events.

"We feel strongly that the sport is more than just track," said Stastny. "We see other events and series being established around us, which we are, generally speaking, happy about. But we are the backbone of the sport between the major championships, including Olympics. We have track and field, that's one. We are truly global. With one event in Jamaica and three in the USA. I think it depends how you define global," he said in reference to the Grand Slam Series.

Simranpreet misses sports pistol gold by one point

SHOOTING WC

Sports Bureau

The 25m sports pistol gold eluded the grasp of Simranpreet Kaur Brar by one point as she fought hard against qualification topper Sun Jujie (585) of China in the Shooting World Cup that concluded in Lima, Peru, on Monday.

The 20-year-old lost the gold 33-34 to the Chinese, even as she matched her in the last two series. The Chinese had a one-point lead after eight series of five shots, and held on to the lead over the next two series to prevail for the gold.

Manu Bhaker made the final in style, shooting the top score of 585 like the Chinese, but was pushed to fourth by Yao Qianxun.

Top show: Simranpreet, champion Sun, and Yao. ISSF

China topped the table with four gold, three silver and six bronze. USA was second with four gold, two silver and a bronze, while India followed third with two gold, four silver and a bronze. Czech Republic, Norway, Italy and Australia were the other teams to win at least one gold.

The results: 25m sports pistol: 1. Sun Yujie (Chn) 34 (585); 2. Simranpreet Kaur Brar 33 (580); 3. Yao Qianxun (Chn) 29 (582); 4. Manu Bhaker 22 (585); 6. Esha Singh 17 (575).

Trap: Mixed team: 1. Australia (Penny Smith, Mitchell Iles) 42 (144); 2. Guatemala (Adriana Olivia, Jean Pierre Cardenas) 39 (144); 3. Italy (Silvana Stanco, Mauro De Filippis) 41 (141); 4. USA (Rachel Tozier, Walton Eller) 40 (142); 8. India-2 (Pragati Dubey, Prithviraj Tondaiman) 134; 12. India (Neeru, Lakshay Sheoran) 128.

BAI shortlists former top players for coaching roles

BADMINTON

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

Clamour around having former players in the national coaching set-up is common across Indian sports and the Badminton Association of India, for one, is hoping to solve a multitude of issues by bringing them formally into the system.

The BAI has shortlisted 10-11 top players interested in coaching and sent their names for approval to the Sports Authority of India, likely to be finalised over the next fortnight. Once cleared, the players - some of whom are already coaching in their personal capacities - will be associated with the foreign coaches for a minimum of 3-4 years.

"We received around 50 applications which shows interest in coaching.

"Once SAI approves, they will be attached to our top foreign coaches across categories - Tan Kim Her, Irwansyah Adi Pratama, Dwi Kristiawan among others - to get a better understanding. It is important to not only develop a pool of good Indian coaches but also to incentivise players to get into coaching as a career," BAI general secretary Sanjay Mishra said during an interaction with select media here on Tuesday.

He also revealed that the Indira Gandhi indoor stadium will host the prestigious badminton World Championships in August next year subject to clearance from the World Body when its representatives come visiting in June.

The city hosted the India Open earlier this year but questions were raised on the conditions and facilities at the KD Jadhav Hall inside the IG Complex.

"We are aware of the challenges but the Sports Ministry and SAI have promised complete support. We also believe that the IGI stadium is in a better shape than the KDJ Hall.

" As for pollution, the event is in August which makes it easier. Of course, everything depends on the BWF report," Mishra hoped.

Venkataraghavan, the consummate professional, turns 80

BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

I first met Venkataraghavan at a movie theatre when I was around 13 or so. It was a murder mystery, and when I asked him if he had worked out who the murderer was, he replied, "I have my suspicions..." It was an elegant response, without a trace of condescension.

A decade later we met professionally; the elegance was in place, and I discovered something more precious, a respect for the game he played with such distinction.

Indian cricket made two mistakes in the handling of Srinivas Venkataraghavan, who has just turned 80. As a keen student of the game, he was the sharpest captain of his time, but led in only five Tests.

Of the great spin quartet – Bishan Bedi, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar and Erapalli Prasanna being the others – he was in competition with Prasanna, the trickier off spinner. But that ignored one of cricket's counter-intuitive beliefs: The better player is not necessarily the better fit in a team.

With Chandrasekhar as the main strike bowler, and Venkataraghavan the foil for his control and consistency, it would have been logical for the third slot to be decided between Bedi and Prasanna.

That is how skipper Ajit Wadekar played it in England in the Test and series India won in 1971. With Chandra claiming six for 38, and Venkataraghavan bottling up the other end, England folded for 101 at the Oval. Bedi needed to bowl just one over!

Earlier, Venkataraghavan's five for 95 was India's best when they won in the West Indies for the first time. He had 35 wickets in those eight Tests, more than anyone else.

Emulating Laker

Venkataraghavan was the most 'English' of Indian off spinners with remarkable discipline and a wicked leg cutter that often carried an edge to the slips or gully, areas in the field where he had no peer as a catcher with large hands and sharp reflexes.

He left flight to shorter men, arguing that with his height the ball was delivered from above the batsman's eyeline anyway. In his debut series against New Zealand in 1965, he became the youngest bowler then to take ten wickets in a match.

That included eleven different players, a record that till then had been Jim Laker's alone.

Venkataraghavan was the most intellectual of players, with an abiding interest in history – he expressed a desire to visit Mohenjo-daro when India toured Pakistan – and a keen understanding of individual motivations. Although in public he comes across as taciturn, in private he is less guarded and displays a mischievous sense of humour.

Like many who know they are more intelligent than their colleagues, he makes those around him nervous.

Yet, this self-awareness came with a spot of diffidence too. And a rare honesty. When, in the West Indies, Garry Sobers celebrated the birth of his child by distributing cigars, Venkataraghavan didn't take one for what to him was a simple, practical reason – he didn't smoke cigars. It caused a bit of a kerfuffle.

No time for sham

Ajit Wadekar, to whom he was vice captain, captured him well, "Venkat is a bit of an enigma. On the surface there is a hard abrasive streak in him, but deep down he is very modest and understanding. He is forthright and given to plain speaking. He has no time for the sham and the superficial. His stiff and unbending attitude has been misunderstood. He is not willing to compromise any of his principles for the sake of convention."

Venkataraghavan brought to his post-playing careers the same diligence and professionalism as TV expert, team manager, secretary of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, and finally umpire, easily one of the best. On his first tour of England he had bought a counter that umpires used then, with a vague idea it might come in useful one day.

I have always wanted to ask him if he knew who was responsible for the terrible events of his career: the manner in which he was captain in one Test and 12th man the next; the way his sacking as captain was announced in the aircraft carrying the team back from England, so on. I expect he will say, "I have my suspicions...," and leave it at that. Class will tell.